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ABSTRACT

This report examines the question of which immigrants to the United States are more likely to be "Americanized" and absorbed into the American nation. The 1990 census found that about 40 percent of all foreign-born residents of the United States were naturalized citizens, while among those who arrived before 1980, about 60 percent were citizens. Factors influencing naturalization rates include country of origin and social and legal pressures in the sending countries that deter their nationals overseas from taking American citizenship. Using the 1990 census figures, this study examines the correlations between naturalization and a variety of socio-economic characteristics. The study is limited to those who are presumed to have been eligible for naturalization by 1990. Several general findings are reported with suggestions given as to the reasons for differences. The results point to immigration policy changes that may increase the likelihood of naturalization. Sections of the report include: (1) "Executive Summary"; (2) "Immigration and Adaptation"; (3) "Naturalization: What Is It?"; (4) "Sources of Data and Methodology"; (5) "Basic Naturalization Rates"; (6) "The Overall Demographic Picture"; (7) "The Overall Socio-Economic Picture"; (8) "Year of Entry: The Overall Picture"; (9) "Age at Entry into the United States"; (10) "The Overall Country Picture"; (11) "Educational Attainment"; (12) "Occupation"; (13) "Income and Poverty"; (14) "Household Type"; (15) "Language"; and (16) "Conclusion." (EH)

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*"Naturalization is the most visible manifestation of Americanization."*
*— Barbara Jordan, Commission on Immigration Reform*

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# Embracing America

## A Look at Which Immigrants Become Citizens

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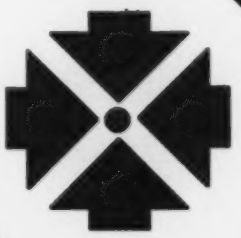
# Embracing America

## A Look at Which Immigrants Become Citizens

by

Leon Bouvier



**Center for Immigration Studies**

**Center Paper 11**

# Executive Summary

There are two important questions in considering legal immigration policy: How many immigrants? and Which immigrants? While the first question is perhaps the more important for a host of reasons,[1] this report examines the second. Whatever the level of total immigration, the national interest would seem to demand that immigrants be selected with an eye toward their Americanization — their absorption into the American nation.

An important indication of an immigrant's degree of Americanization is whether he or she acquires citizenship — thus formally becoming an American. The 1990 census found that about 40 percent of all foreign-born residents of the United States were naturalized citizens, while among those who arrived before 1980, about 60 percent were citizens.

Our nation is currently experiencing a surge in applications for citizenship, with about one million applicants in 1995, quintuple the level just five years ago. Another million applications are expected this year.

This trend has been attributed in part to the passage of Proposition 187 in California and attempts by the Republican majority in Congress to cut off federal benefits for non-citizens. Combined with these factors is the large increase in the number of immigrants eligible for naturalization, including formerly-illegal aliens who received amnesty under the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA).

To better understand the current surge in naturalization, and to craft a sensible immigration policy for the future, one may profit by looking back and asking, Who naturalizes? It has often been noted that natives of certain countries, Mexico in particular, have extremely low rates of naturalization, while immigrants from many Asian and European countries have higher rates. Proximity to the immigrant homeland has been offered as a hypothesis — plausibly, since Canadians also have a relatively low rate of naturalization. Other factors influencing naturalization rates include social and legal pressures in the sending countries that deter their nationals overseas from taking American citizenship. But there has been relatively little inquiry into what qualitative factors (which can be influenced by immigration policy) might contribute to differences in naturalization rates.

Looking at the 1990 census, this study examines the correlations between naturalization and a variety of socio-economic characteristics. Rather than looking at all immigrants, which would include recent arrivals not yet eligible for citizenship, as well as short-term temporary residents, this study is limited to those who are presumed to have been eligible for naturalization by 1990 (were over age 25 and entered the United States no later than 1985). Among the general findings:

- Higher levels of education correspond to higher rates of naturalization;
- Higher-skill occupations correspond to higher rates of naturalization;
- Higher household income corresponds to higher rates of naturalization;
- Those receiving public assistance are less likely to become citizens than those who are not receiving public assistance;
- Immigrants living in married-couple households are more likely to become Americans than those in single-parent households;
- Immigrants who speak English well are more likely to be citizens — but more than one-

[1] See Leon F. Bouvier and Lindsey Grant, *How Many Americans?: Population, Immigration and the Environment*, San Francisco: 1995, Sierra Club Books.

quarter of those who speak English poorly or not at all were naturalized citizens;

- Despite narrowing of these differences over time, they do not disappear.

In looking specifically at the top 15 countries of origin, it is clear that some of the differences among national groups are due to the educational attainment and other characteristics of their immigrants in the United States. For instance, since immigrants born in India are 22 times more likely to be college graduates than Mexican immigrants, it comes as no surprise that Indian-born people are more likely to have become Americans than those born in Mexico.

However, even after controlling for these factors, national differences do not disappear. For instance:

- A Mexican-born college graduate, though more likely to naturalize than a high school dropout from Mexico, is less likely to acquire citizenship than a high school dropout from China.

- By the same token, though Mexican natives in managerial or professional jobs are almost twice as likely to be citizens as their compatriots who are laborers, a Mexican manager is still less likely to be naturalized than a laborer born in China.

These results point to immigration policy changes that may increase the likelihood of naturalization. A return to national-origins quotas is neither advisable nor likely, so some differences in naturalization rates will persist among groups of people born in different countries. In 1995, only 12 percent of immigrants were admitted based on their skills or education. A federal immigration policy that puts more emphasis on a prospective immigrant's skills and education, rather than his or her family connections, would increase the likelihood that newcomers will embrace America as their new homeland.

# I. Immigration and Adaptation

Immigration, as a political and socio-economic issue, has come of age in recent years. This should not come as a surprise to anyone familiar with the shifts in immigration trends over the past few decades. With the passage of the 1965 amendments to the Immigration and Nationality Act, levels of legal immigration soared, and by the 1980s, averaged close to 800,000 per year. Thus far in the 1990s, the average is closer to one million and, unless significant immigration reform legislation is enacted, total legal immigration in this decade will surpass the historic high of 1901-1910 (8,795,386). According to the 1995 Current Population Survey (CPS), just under 23 million U.S. residents were foreign born in March 1995.[1] To that we should add millions of illegal immigrants who may not have been counted by the census.

Together, changes in laws governing legal immigration (in 1965 and again in 1986 and 1990), the 1980 Refugee Act, and increased illegal immigration all have contributed to a remarkable shift in the sources of immigration to the United States.[2] Prior to the 1965 changes, most new residents came from European countries. Since 1965, close to 80 percent of all legal newcomers, including refugees, have come from Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, with only about 15 percent coming from Europe. If illegal immigrants were included, the share coming from Latin America would be even greater.

The diversity caused by these immigration shifts is further magnified by the heterogeneity within these new groups. For Asians, Latin Americans, Caribbeans and Africans, internal diversity is at least as complex as it was for the European immigrants at the turn of the 20th century. In 1994, no less than eight Asian countries sent at least 10,000 migrants to the United States (China, Hong Kong, India, Iran, Korea, the Philippines, Taiwan, Vietnam). Similarly, from Latin America and the Caribbean, at least 10,000 people came from Mexico, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Jamaica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Colombia and Ecuador. The numbers arriving from Africa are smaller, but climbing.

The enormous growth in the numbers of newcomers and the diversity of their sources are rapidly creating a new kind of nation. Already in California, no single racial group comprises a majority of the population. Texas and New York will soon follow. By the middle of the next century, should current trends persist, the nation will no longer have a majority racial group. All Americans will be members of minority groups.

**Incorporation of Newcomers**

These substantial changes in the composition of the nation's population have renewed the century-old debate concerning the proper cultural adaptation of newcomers and their descendants into American society. In the early part of this century, the argument was whether the newcomers should be immersed into "Anglo-conformity" or whether they should maintain their own identities (cultural pluralism) within the overall society. Actually, the compromise "melting pot" theory worked reasonably well, although the process took decades.[3] While Italians, Poles and others did not embrace Anglo-conformity, they Americanized and in the process changed the definition of what is an American. By the 1960s, Americans of eastern and southern European descent were finally reaching the pinnacles of economic and political life, culminating in the elevation of a second-generation Italian American, Lee Iacocca, to the chair of the Chrysler Corporation and the nomination for the presidency of a second-gen-

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[1] Kristin A. Hansen, "Profile of the Foreign-Born Population in 1995: What the CPS Nativity Data Tell Us," Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Population Association of America, New Orleans, May 1996.

[2] See, for example, Leon F. Bouvier, *Peaceful Invasions*, Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991, pp. 21ff.

[3] ibid., chapter 6.

eration Greek American, Michael Dukakis.

We are still a nation in the process of defining itself. Among Whites, we have gone well beyond Anglo-conformity.[4] But, as the demographic changes just described accelerate, the nation is facing another challenge as its population composition becomes more racially mixed. Again, the argument is emerging: assimilation vs. pluralism.

Can the relative success achieved over the past half a century in the adaptation of third wave White immigrants and their descendants into a new kind of America be replicated with the current and future mix of racially diverse ethnic groups — the so-called "Fourth Wave"? The question of how the United States is to maintain a unified country with peoples from all over the world is one that cannot be ignored. "A dynamic nation whose place in the world, whose sources of immigration, whose self-image constantly changes, must again and again address itself to this great question and ponder what its answer is to be."[5]

*E Pluribus Unum* (Out of Many, One) remains our nation's motto and we should strive to realize it in the 21st century. But it will be a difficult challenge. Some claim that because we are dealing with different races, rather than simply ethnic groups within one race, it will be impossible to achieve a unified nation. Yet early in the 20th century, the word "race" was applied to various European groups; and eminent scholars like psychologist Carl Brigham "fully accepted the prevailing division of the population of Europe into three *races* [italics added] — Nordic, Alpine and Mediterranean — and shared the eugenicists' alarm over the predominance of the supposedly inferior latter two of these in the American immigrant population."[6] Similar fears are voiced today.

More ominous than these treatises is the growing acceptance of multiculturalism as the wave of the future and the tendency to deride cultural assimilation. If multiculturalism had maintained its benign qualities exhibited earlier on, this might be acceptable. However a harder-edged version is currently in vogue. The focus is on a contention that the United States is a compact between what some are beginning to lump together as a "Euro-American" population and a limited set of minority groups, made up principally of African-Americans, Native Americans, Asians and Hispanics.[7]

Total cultural assimilation is equally unlikely given the demographic picture. It would be unrealistic to expect today's newcomers to embrace Anglo-conformity any more than their predecessors did. Nevertheless, *E Pluribus Unum* succinctly describes the ideal that the American nation should strive to achieve.

Too often, Americans confuse the fact that we are a pluralistic nation with acceptance of cultural pluralism. The United States is pluralistic in the sense of having many religious and racial/ethnic groups represented in its population. However, the United States has constantly striven to achieve overall unity. That remains our goal as we move towards becoming the first truly universal nation on the planet. In the process, the nation will change, as the newer groups add their characteristics to the "stew" that is America. Nevertheless, a new form of "Americanization" should be our goal and a recent statement by the late Barbara Jordan, of the bipartisan U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, best expresses what we mean by Americanization: "That term [Americanization] earned a bad reputation in the 1920s. Nevertheless, we find it the best way to describe what the Commission believes to be an essential part of immigration policy — the civic incorporation of newcomers. The United States is the most successful multiethnic nation in history. It has united immigrants and their descendants from all

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[4] Robert C. Christopher, *Crashing the Gates: The De-Wasping of America's Power Elite*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

[5] Nathan Glazer, *Ethnic Dilemma*, New York: Hawthorne Press, 1983, p. 11.

[6] Nicholas Lemann, "The Structure of Success in America," *Atlantic Monthly*, August 1995, p. 48.

[7] Thomas J. Archdeacon, "Melting Pot or Cultural Pluralism?" in Revue Europeenne des Migrations Internationales, Vol. 6, No. 1, 1990, pp. 11, 18.

over the world around a commitment to democratic ideals and constitutional principles."[8]

**Naturalization**

How does one measure Americanization? Making the important decision to apply for citizenship seems to be the best indicator that one wishes to become an American. Again citing Jordan, "Naturalization is the most visible manifestation of Americanization."[9] Of the 23 million foreign-born residents of the United States, how many have made that decision? Does it really imply a commitment to "become American?". Why do some foreign-born residents opt for citizenship while others do not? Can we then get some impression of the type of individual who will, or already has, become an American citizen? That is the purpose of this study.

Answering such questions is especially pertinent today as the number of applications for naturalization soars. They averaged 235,573 per year during the 1980s and were 206,688 in 1991. They jumped to 342,269 in FY-92, and then to 521,868 in FY-93 and 543,353 in FY-94. Michael Hoefer of the INS statistics office has said: "I'm estimating that about four million people will become naturalized citizens in the 1990s."[10]

Some commentators have attributed this large increase to growing fear that non-citizens will lose certain rights, in the wake of California's Proposition 187 and congressional moves to restrict legal immigrants' access to certain public benefits. This certainly explains some of the most recent jump. At least some of the upsurge in naturalization applications, however, is simply due to the increase in the number of eligible applicants. "For the seven years before the 1986 IRCA legislation went into effect, the average number of new legal immigrants ... was about 581,000 per year. During the next seven years the average jumped by over 25 percent to 729,400 per year — not counting the illegal aliens who were granted legal residence under the IRCA amnesty provision. When they are included in the calculation, the average number of new immigrants over the most recent seven-year period increased by nearly 47 percent to about 853,000 per year."[11]

Given these statistics, the increases in naturalization applications are to be expected and likely will continue. So the question with which we are concerned here, Who naturalizes?, grows in importance.

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[8] Barbara Jordan, statement to the press, June 7, 1995, Washington, D.C.

[9] ibid.

[10] Michael Hoefer, Paper presented at the conference on the "Rising Tide of Naturalization in the 1990s," National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund, Feb. 26, 1993, Washington, D.C.

[11] John Martin, "A Natural Surge in Naturalization," *Immigration Review*, No. 22, Summer 1995, p. 9.

## II. Naturalization: What is it?

Before assuming that naturalization can serve as a surrogate for "becoming American," the term itself should be defined and discussed. As with most other countries, the United States has a legal procedure through which foreign-born residents may become citizens if they so desire. The procedure, naturalization, confers citizenship upon a person after birth. By law, any individual born in the United States is automatically granted citizenship, irrespective of the legal status of the parents.

Any person legally admitted to the United States as an immigrant can become a naturalized citizen. However, certain requirements must be met. An alien must be at least 18 years of age; must have been lawfully admitted to the United States for permanent residence and must have lived in the country continuously for at least five years (three years in the case of the spouse of a U.S. citizen) and six months in the state from which he or she is applying for citizenship. In addition, a prospective citizen must be able to speak, read and write in English, have knowledge of U.S. government and history, and have good moral character. Finally, applicants for citizenship must take an oath of allegiance to the United States, thereby renouncing allegiance to their native homeland. Children under 18 who come to the United States with their parents derive citizenship when their parents naturalize. A $95 processing fee is also required of naturalization applicants.

### History of Naturalization

The procedure governing naturalization has been altered several times since first introduced in 1790. At that time, immigrants were eligible for citizenship after only two years residence in the country. That law was repealed in 1795 and the resident requirement was raised to five years and required a declaration of intention to seek citizenship at least three years prior to naturalization.

In 1798, the Federalists limited the political impact that immigrants could have on American politics and, at least temporarily, deprived their Republican opponents of a potentially important base of support by passing yet another Naturalization Act.[1] This act, passed by a vote of 41 to 40 in the House of Representatives, raised to fourteen years the residence requirement imposed on immigrants who sought American citizenship.

In 1802, the residence period was returned to five years, where it has been ever since. That legislation also established the basic requirements for naturalization, including good moral character, allegiance to the Constitution, a formal declaration of intention and witnesses.

Essentially, the 1802 law remains in effect, with one very important exception. It was only in 1952 that legislation was passed that made all races eligible for naturalization. Until then many nonwhites, especially Chinese, Japanese and other Asians, were barred from becoming citizens. That 1952 law, the McCarran-Walter Act, stated that the right of a person to become a naturalized citizen of the United States shall not be denied or abridged because of race or sex or because such a person is married. "The Act also required that immigrants be able to read and write simple words and phrases in English, a higher threshold than the previous requirement to be able to speak and understand English. The naturalization procedures enacted by McCarran-Walter have experienced only minor changes in intervening years."[2]

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[1] Thomas J. Archdeacon, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History*, New York: Free Press, 1983, p. 60.

[2] Ruth Ellen Wasem, "Naturalization of Immigrants: Policy, Trends and Issues," *CRS Report to the Congress*, Feb. 21, 1995, p. 5.

**Reasons for Naturalizing**

Why would a foreign-born resident of the United States go through this complex procedure to become an American citizen? The only concrete advantages of citizenship are the rights to vote, be eligible to work in some restricted federal government positions, qualify for certain welfare provisions (if current legislative proposals are enacted), and be able to bring into the country certain relatives under current immigration law. Another advantage of U.S. citizenship is the qualification for an American passport. "An American passport is often considered the most desirable to possess."[3]

There is yet another more abstract and altruistic reason for naturalization — the desire to become an American. Recall that included in the naturalization procedure is the oath of allegiance to the United States and the renunciation of any other country. "Becoming American" was an important goal for the Founding Fathers. As historian Thomas Archdeacon has written: "The Founding Fathers had moved far toward accepting the idea that citizenship was a voluntary contract, rather than a perpetual and immutable relationship between subject and king that was based on the laws of nature.... The argument implied the wisdom of acting quickly both to integrate willing newcomers into the political community and to make formal their allegiance to their new country."[4]

If such a desire is present in the minds of those applying for citizenship, naturalization may represent evidence of cultural adaptation to the new country of residence. A permanent resident who willingly renounces a previous homeland for the United States is demonstrating his or her desire to become an American. A permanent resident who does not do so maintains continued allegiance to another homeland.

Earlier we cited the late Barbara Jordan's definition of Americanization. President Clinton, in agreeing with her Commission's report commented: "the Commission's recommendations are pro-family, pro-work, pro-naturalization."[5]

On August 8, 1995 some 200 immigrants became Americans at a large ceremony in Chicago. One Ecuadoran couple, in the country 20 years, commented: "It's the idea that when you first come you come with the idea of finding a new life. You really don't know where it is or where it's going to end up. And we have now found our lives. We now have our little niche. And we want to call America home." Another new citizen from Ethiopia, however, says he applied for citizenship now "because he feared the U.S. Congress would soon tighten eligibility requirements."[6]

Thus, there are numerous reasons for wanting to become an American citizen. Unfortunately, in recent years, many applying for citizenship appear to have lost some of the altruism associated with taking an oath of allegiance to a new nation. Such an equivocal attitude was encouraged by Attorney General Janet Reno when she urged Cubans living in south Florida to become citizens so that they could bring in relatives from Cuba. More recently, welfare reform proposals would restrict welfare benefits to most legal residents who are not citizens. Should such a policy be enacted into law, naturalization may soar, but for the wrong reason.

Nevertheless, and despite differences in reasons to do so, the decision to naturalize may indicate whether immigrants from certain countries are more acculturated to the United States than others. Recall that to become a citizen, one has to read, write and speak English and be familiar with American civics and history. The very act of becoming a citizen may serve as a surrogate for measuring cultural

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[3] Philip Q. Yang, "Explaining Immigrant Naturalization," *International Migration Review*, vol. xxviii, no. 3 (Fall 1994), p. 450.

[4] Archdeacon, p. 58.

[5] Cited in *Immigration Review*, Summer 1995, p. 2.

[6] Voice of America feature on naturalization, 8-9-95.

adaptation to the new country of residence.

Naturalization has its negative aspects too. New citizens must be loyal to their adopted country rather than the country of their birth. They may lose property and other rights in their original homeland. Indeed, the voluntary renunciation of one's former nationality and of allegiance through an oath to a new country can be "considered a psychological cost."[7] Finally, there is the long and, for some, expensive process which involves learning English and studying the U.S. Constitution. Some non-citizens simply fear going through such a process. Indeed, David North found that in 1986, 30 percent of applicants failed to pass the examination.[8] Thus, one suspects that many foreign-born residents are torn when trying to decide whether or not to become Americans. It is not an easy decision and for those who go through the process, even if it is primarily for economic or family-reunification motives, the rejection of the homeland and the swearing of allegiance to a new country must reflect some desire to join the mainstream of American society.

This leads us to the main topic of this monograph: What proportion of foreign-born residents have opted for citizenship? How does this proportion vary by country of origin? What are the characteristics of foreign-born citizens compared to those who choose not to naturalize?

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[7] Yang, p. 453.

[8] David North, "The Long Grey Welcome: A Study of the American Naturalization Program," *International Migration Review*, vol. xxi, no. 2 (Summer 1987), pp. 311-326.

## III. Sources of Data and Methodology

Two basic methods can be used to determine naturalization rates (that is, the percentage of a specified group who becomes citizens); one is dynamic, the other stable. The former traces a cohort of immigrants through their life in the United States to determine how many apply for citizenship. The latter looks at one point in time and calculates the proportion of the specified population who are citizens.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) follows the cohort of immigrants who received permanent residence status in 1977 to determine the naturalization rate. INS matches the administrative data set of these immigrants with the naturalization records for each subsequent year through 1991. By 1991, 36.2 percent of those granted legal residence in 1977 had opted for citizenship. The rate will continue to climb as more individuals from that cohort decide to become American citizens. However, the median period of residency before naturalization is between seven and eight years. Thus, the rate is not expected to increase significantly in future years. The INS study found significant variations in naturalization rates. For example, immigrants who are young adults when they arrive, or who come from distant parts of the world such as Asia and Africa, have high rates. INS also follows the cohort of immigrants who became permanent residents in 1982. Library of Congress researcher Ruth Ellen Wasem has examined the INS data extensively. Much of the following summary of this cohort approach is derived from her study.[1]

While the 1977 cohort of 459,356 immigrants exhibited a naturalization rate of 36.2 percent by 1991, that of the 1982 cohort (594,119) was only 29.5 percent. Given the five-year difference, this would be expected. When the analysis is limited to immigrants who would have been 18 years old within five years of immigrating, the 1977 naturalization rate becomes 39.1 percent, and the 1982 rate becomes 33.9 percent. Wasem also noted that skills-based immigrants were more likely to naturalize than family-based or humanitarian immigrants. Generally, those with higher level professions were also more apt to become citizens. Those who came to the United States at an early age were much more likely to be naturalized than the elderly newcomers. Sex and marital status were not meaningful factors in determining who naturalizes and who does not.

Wasem found that in both the 1977 and 1982 cohorts, Asian and African immigrants had the highest rates of naturalization. Those from North America were among the least likely to naturalize. In the 1977 cohort, those coming from the Philippines, the former Soviet Union and China ranked at the top; those coming from Canada, Italy and Mexico were at the bottom insofar as naturalization rates were concerned. The pattern for 1982 was quite similar.

Although there is much to be learned from these cohort analyses, in this paper the stable methodology is used. By using Census data, we are able to go back in time and note changes that may have taken place over a longer period. We also have access to certain variables not available for the INS cohort analysis, such as poverty indicators.

The 1990 Census publication on the foreign born serves as the base for the calculations, to which have been added numerous other variables derived from a special sample of the 1990 census.[2] Unless otherwise stated, all the statistics in the remainder of this report come from the 1990 census. It should be pointed out that "evaluation studies completed after previous censuses indicated that some persons may have reported themselves as citizens although

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[1] Ruth Ellen Wasem, op cit.

[2] U.S. Bureau of the Census, *The Foreign-born Population of the United States*, Washington: GPO, 1993.

they had not yet attained that status."[3] Thus, from that point of view, these naturalization rates may be slightly exaggerated. On the other hand, it must be pointed out that the total number of foreign born includes an unknown number of individuals who are not eligible to naturalize — illegal immigrants (those who were counted in the 1990 census) and foreign students, for example. We feel that these opposite arguments tend to cancel one another and that the resulting percents are about as accurate as possible, given the nature of the data.

[3] Bureau of the Census, B-4.

# IV. Basic Naturalization Rates

According to the 1990 Census, 40.5 percent of the 19,767,316 foreign-born residents of the United States were naturalized citizens. This is the lowest rate since the Census Bureau began asking questions about naturalization in 1920 (Table 4.1). More recent data from the 1995 CPS find that, of the 23 million foreign born living in the United States, only about 30.9 percent are naturalized.

Table 4.1

**Decennial Census Foreign-Born Population: 1920-1990**

| Year | Total | Naturalized | Nat. Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1920 | 12,686,39 | 6,218,801 | 49.0% |
| 1930 | 13,336,35 | 7,681,681 | 57.6% |
| 1940 | 11,292,82 | 7,159,643 | 63.4% |
| 1950 | 10,020,45 | 7,466,445 | 74.5% |
| 1960* | 8,979,524 | NA | NA |
| 1970 | 8,520,398 | 5,795,027 | 68.0% |
| 1980 | 14,079,90 | 7,110,475 | 50.5% |
| 1990 | 19,767,31 | 7,996,998 | 40.5% |

* The 1960 Census did not ask about naturalization.

As mentioned earlier, it is expected that these rates will climb during this decade. But the sample survey of 1995 puts such a prediction into doubt. Furthermore, such a low rate brings into question the reasons people want to become citizens. Perhaps "becoming American" is not as important as it once was.

The naturalization rate varies with length of residence in the country. Very few new residents are citizens. On the other hand, almost 61 percent of the foreign born who arrived before 1980 are naturalized citizens (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2

**Naturalization Rates by Period of Entry for Selected Countries: 1990**

| Country | Total F-B Pop. | Total Nat. Rate | Pre-1980 Nat. Rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| **All Countries** | **19,767,316** | **40.5%** | **60.8%** |
| France | 119,233 | 52.6% | 71.6% |
| Germany | 711,929 | 72.0% | 79.5% |
| Greece | 177,398 | 71.2% | 78.3% |
| Hungary | 110,337 | 82.1% | 90.1% |
| Ireland | 169,827 | 67.8% | 81.6% |
| Italy | 580,592 | 75.9% | 79.6% |
| Poland | 388,328 | 62.4% | 81.6% |
| Portugal | 1,210,122 | 40.0% | 51.9% |
| United Kingdom | 640,145 | 50.0% | 63.2% |
| U.S.S.R. | 333,725 | 59.0% | 86.3% |
| Cambodia | 118,833 | 20.0% | 47.9% |
| China | 529,837 | 44.2% | 76.8% |
| Hong Kong | 147,131 | 54.5% | 82.5% |
| India | 450,406 | 31.9% | 62.0% |
| Iran | 210,941 | 27.2% | 44.1% |
| Japan | 290,128 | 28.2% | 56.1% |
| South Korea | 568,397 | 40.6% | 73.6% |
| Laos | 171,577 | 17.0% | 33.6% |
| Philippines | 912,674 | 54.0% | 80.9% |
| Taiwan | 244,102 | 38.7% | 80.5% |
| Vietnam | 543,262 | 42.8% | 68.6% |
| Canada | 744,830 | 54.1% | 63.4% |
| Mexico | 4,298,014 | 22.6% | 32.4% |
| Cuba | 736,971 | 51.0% | 63.4% |
| Domin. Repub. | 347,858 | 27.6% | 42.9% |
| Haiti | 225,393 | 27.1% | 47.3% |
| Jamaica | 334,140 | 38.4% | 11.6% |
| El Salvador | 465,433 | 15.3% | 31.3% |
| Guatemala | 225,739 | 16.8% | 34.7% |
| Nicaragua | 168,659 | 15.2% | 45.5% |
| Colombia | 286,124 | 29.0% | 47.9% |
| Ecuador | 143,314 | 25.9% | 38.3% |
| Peru | 144,199 | 26.4% | 52.6% |
| Africa | 363,819 | 34.1% | 61.5% |
| Oceania | 104,145 | 34.1% | 52.3% |

Variations are especially marked by country of origin. Seven of the ten sending countries with the highest naturalization rates are in Europe (including the former Soviet Union). The remaining leaders are Canada, Hong Kong and the Philippines. On the other hand, seven of the ten sending countries with the lowest rates are in Latin America and the Caribbean. The other three are Cambodia, Iran and Laos. Naturalization rates range from 82.1 percent for Hungary to 15.2 percent for Nicaragua. If the list is limited to those countries with at least 500,000 foreign born, Germany rates highest (72.0) and Mexico lowest (22.6).

A cursory glance at these lists of countries reinforces the finding that year of entry is an important factor in determining naturalization rates. If most people from Germany, for example, arrived before 1980, while those from Mexico came more recently, that alone would explain some of the wide disparity in the naturalization rates for people from those countries. In fact, 89 percent of Germans arrived prior to 1980, compared to 50 percent of Mexicans.

To control for this important factor, the rates for those immigrants who arrived before 1980 are examined. The results are similar to those for all foreign born (Table 4.3). The same seven European countries (including the former USSR) are in the top ten, with Hungary again heading the list. The remaining leaders are Hong Kong, the Philippines and Taiwan. Eight of the bottom ten countries of origin are Latin American or Caribbean, Iran and Laos being the sole exceptions. Salvadorans exhibit the lowest naturalization rate among those entering the country before 1980 — 31.3 percent. Looking only at the leading countries of origin (that is, 500,000 foreign born or more), Italians have the highest naturalization rate (79.6%) closely followed by Germans (79.5%). The 32.4 percent rate for Mexicans is the lowest among the major sending countries.

If naturalization indicates a desire to become American, then we must conclude that, based on these crude measures, Europeans would appear to exhibit such a desire to a greater extent than other immigrants. Conversely, Latin Americans and people from the Caribbean would appear not to be as interested in pursuing naturalization as their fellow immigrants from other portions of the globe.

Asia is in the middle. China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea, India and the Philippines all have fairly high rates of naturalization; those coming from Southeast Asia and the Middle East have low rates. Also found in the middle of the naturalization picture are the foreign born coming from Africa and Oceania.[1]

Table 4.3

**Highest and Lowest Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Selected Period of Entry**

| | Total Foreign Born | | Entered Before 1980 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | WORLD | 40.5% | WORLD | 60.8% |
| HIGHEST RATES | Hungary | 82.1% | Hungary | 90.1% |
| | Italy | 75.9% | USSR | 86.3% |
| | Germany | 72.0% | Hong Kong | 82.5% |
| | Greece | 71.2% | Ireland | 81.6% |
| | Ireland | 67.8% | Poland | 81.6% |
| | Poland | 62.4% | Philippines | 80.9% |
| | USSR | 59.0% | Taiwan | 80.5% |
| | Hong Kong | 54.5% | Italy | 79.6% |
| | Canada | 54.1% | Germany | 79.5% |
| | Philippines | 54.0% | Greece | 78.3% |
| LOWEST RATES | Nicaragua | 15.2% | El Salvador | 31.3% |
| | El Salvador | 15.3% | Mexico | 32.4% |
| | Guatemala | 16.8% | Laos | 33.6% |
| | Laos | 17.0% | Guatemala | 34.7% |
| | Cambodia | 20.0% | Ecuador | 38.3% |
| | Mexico | 22.6% | Domin. Repub. | 42.9% |
| | Ecuador | 25.9% | Jamaica | 43.4% |
| | Peru | 26.4% | Iran | 44.1% |
| | Haiti | 27.1% | Nicaragua | 45.5% |
| | Iran | 27.2% | Haiti | 47.3% |

[1] The Census Bureau did not separate these two regions into individual countries.

Looking at *all* immigrants as we have done in this chapter yields some interesting differences. However, little is known about the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of naturalized citizens versus non-citizens. Are there variables that might account for the differences in naturalization rates, and if so, what implications might that have for policy?

In the remainder of this monograph we will limit our analysis to those individuals who, at least in theory, could be naturalized.[2] Then we will examine these groups by various socio-economic variables.

Who naturalizes and who doesn't is obviously a complex issue. By relying on both the published report from the Census Bureau cited earlier and these new special tabulations derived from the PUMS sample of the 1990 census, more definitive answers can perhaps be offered to the question: who naturalizes and who doesn't?

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[2] Data for this study are a combination of cases from the 1990 PUMS 1% and 5% samples. The figure for total foreign born persons as reported in *The Foreign-Born Population of the United States: 1990* was used to verify the weighted total of persons who report being naturalized or non-citizens. A total of 19.8 million from the Census publication compared to 20.4 million from the PUMS data — a difference of less than 3 percent.

Combining records from the two different sample data sets required adjustment of person-weights to achieve a true figure for the total weighted universe. Person-weights for cases from the 5% sample were adjusted by a factor of .8333 and weights of cases from the 1% sample were adjusted by a factor of .1667, so that all person-weights in the 6 % combined sample equal approximately 1.0%.

# V. The Overall Demographic Picture

The "universe" for the remainder of this report is comprised of all foreign-born residents of the United States who, as of the 1990 census, were 25 years of age or over and who entered the country prior to 1985. By limiting our universe to these people, we are ensured that the subjects have fulfilled the minimum residency and age requirements for naturalization. In this chapter, we will examine the total national picture regarding naturalization. In later chapters, we will concentrate on the fifteen leading countries of origin.

According to our weighted sample from the 1990 census, we estimate that there were 13,105,239 foreign-born residents in the country ages 25 or over who entered prior to 1985, of whom 54.1 percent were citizens. Note that this proportion is higher than that for all foreign-born residents (40.5%). Our calculation better represents the true picture of naturalization since it is limited to only those persons who could apply if they so desired.

Non-citizens are younger than those who have naturalized. Over 60 percent of the non-citizens were under age 45 in 1990 and only 11 percent were 65 or over. Just 40 percent of the citizens were under 45 and almost 27 percent were 65 and over.

The rate of naturalization increases with the age of the respondent. While only 39 percent of the foreign born under 35 are naturalized, that rate rises to 74 percent among the oldest foreign-born residents (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1

**Naturalization Rates by Age in 1990**

| Age | Nat. Rate | Distribution by Age in 1990 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| 25-34 | 38.8% | 17.6% | 32.8% | 24.6% |
| 35-44 | 48.5% | 22.3% | 28.0% | 24.9% |
| 45-54 | 55.9% | 18.6% | 17.4% | 18.1% |
| 55-64 | 62.0% | 14.9% | 10.8% | 13.0% |
| 65+ | 73.8% | 26.6% | 11.0% | 19.4% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

The longer a person born elsewhere resides in the United States, the higher the probability that person will apply for citizenship. This commonsense observation is backed by the data in Table 5.2. Overall, 36 percent of the foreign-born population in our special universe arrived before 1965 and 38 percent arrived after 1974. However, among the non-citizens 57 percent are relative newcomers (i.e., after 1974), while only 22 percent of the citizens came after 1974. While almost 17 percent of the non-citizens have been in the United States since before 1965, that proportion is 52 percent among those who have naturalized. Although only 31.7 percent of the newcomers have naturalized, that rate rises to a very high 78.8 percent among foreign born who came to the United States prior to 1965.

Table 5.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Year of Entry**

| Year of Entry | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Year of Entry | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| 1975-84 | 31.7% | 22.3% | 56.7% | 38.1% |
| 1965-74 | 52.9% | 25.5% | 26.8% | 26.1% |
| Pre-1965 | 78.8% | 52.2% | 16.5% | 35.8% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

We have examined the relationship between naturalization and current age, but what about age at entry? Are individuals who come to the United States at a young age more likely eventually to opt for citizenship than those who come at a later age? In Table 5.3, note than only 7.4 percent of all foreign born (falling within our universe) arrived after age 44. This reinforces the long held position that new immigrants tend to be young adults who may come with their children.

Almost 59 percent of all the foreign born were under 25 when they came to the United States. Over three-quarters of those who entered as chil-

Table 5.3

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Age at Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Age at Entry | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Age at Entry | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| 0-14 | 77.5% | 39.3% | 13.5% | 27.5% |
| 15-24 | 45.0% | 26.1% | 37.6% | 31.4% |
| 25-44 | 47.9% | 29.9% | 38.4% | 33.8% |
| 45 & over | 34.8% | 4.7% | 10.5% | 7.4% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

dren, presumably with their parents, have become citizens. Less than 35 percent of those coming after age 44 have opted for citizenship.

Non-citizens arrived at an older age than did citizens. Only 13.5 percent came when they were children under 15, compared to over 39 percent among those who naturalized. But more than ten percent of the non-citizens came after reaching at least age 45, compared to less than five percent among the citizens.

However, these statistics may be misleading. More important is: When did they arrive? and How old were they at that time? Table 5.4 addresses these questions.

The two extremes exhibit vast differences in rates of naturalization. Among the foreign born who arrived as children prior to 1965, over 85 percent are now citizens. Even among these foreign-born "old-timers" the rate falls with age at entry. Just over 60 percent of those who came before 1965 but were age 45 or over have naturalized. At the other extreme, a little over one-quarter of the foreign born who entered the country between 1975 and 1984 and were at least 45 years of age at that time have been naturalized.

The conclusion from these basic demographic data is obvious: the longer one remains in the United States the more likely that person will apply for citizenship; the younger that person is when he or she arrives, again, the likelihood of citizenship improves. When we look at the statistics in this manner, the original 54 percent naturalized takes on new meaning. Clearly, with time, a substantial majority of foreign-born permanent residents have opted for citizenship. It remains to be seen if this will continue to be the case in future years. Furthermore, as we will see in later chapters, these rates vary among the sending countries and other variables.

Table 5.4

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Age at Entry and Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age at Entry | Nat. Rate by Year of Entry | | |
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 |
| 0-14 | 40.6% | 57.2% | 85.5% |
| 15-24 | 30.6% | 51.6% | 70.2% |
| 25-44 | 33.2% | 54.6% | 70.8% |
| 45 & over | 27.1% | 39.5% | 60.8% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.8% |

# VI. The Overall Socio-Economic Picture

Variables besides age and year of entry must be considered when trying to distinguish the foreign born who naturalize from those who do not. Other studies have suggested that education and income, for example, contribute to higher rates of naturalization.[1] In this section, we examine data gathered from the 1990 census for our special universe of foreign-born residents of the United States on a number of socio-economic variables. These may shed additional light on who does and who doesn't become an American citizen.

### Educational Attainment

Overall, more than six out of ten foreign-born residents have no more than a high school education; indeed, almost 42 percent have less than 12 years of schooling. Just under 20 percent have at least a college degree. These shares vary widely between citizens and non-citizens (Table 6.1). Whereas 69 percent of the latter have no more than a high school education, that rate is but 55 percent among those who have naturalized. At the other extreme, only 15 percent of non-citizens have a college degree, compared to 23 percent among the citizens.

Table 6.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Educational Attainment**

| Educational Attainment | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Educational Attainment | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| 0-11 Years | 43.5% | 33.5% | 51.2% | 41.5% |
| H.S. Grad. | 58.6% | 21.3% | 17.8% | 19.7% |
| Some College | 61.5% | 22.0% | 16.3% | 19.4% |
| College Grad.+ | 65.1% | 23.3% | 14.7% | 19.4% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Of particular relevance to our study is the fact that naturalization rates rise with increased education. From 43.5 percent among the foreign born with less than a high school education, the rate increases gradually and reaches 65.1 percent among those with a college degree. Thus, the relationship between educational attainment and naturalization is powerful and may explain some of the differences we have already noted.

### Occupation

We turn now to the occupations of the foreign born. Our universe is limited to those who are employed, full-time or part-time, and totals 7,995,393, of whom 4,182,509 (52.3%) are naturalized and 3,812,884 are not.

Just over half of all these foreign born are employed in the two highest white-collar type occupations and another 16 percent are in services. Some 30 percent are in the blue-collar occupations — that is, production, crafts, operators, etc. Less than 40 percent of non-citizens are in the top two white-collar occupations, compared to 60 percent among citizens.

Following the educational attainment pattern, the higher the type of occupation, the higher the naturalization rate. Almost 65 percent of managers and professionals are naturalized, but only 39 percent of operators, etc., are (Table 6.2).

Educational attainment and occupation are undoubtedly closely related and this plays an important factor in the strong relationship between occupations and naturalization rates. Again, occupational and educational differences among natives of different countries may explain some naturalization-rate differences.

[1] See Wasem, op. cit., for example.

Table 6.2

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Occupation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Occupation | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Occup. | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Manager, Professional | 64.6% | 31.0% | 18.7% | 25.1% |
| Technical, Sales, Admin. | 60.2% | 29.0% | 21.1% | 25.2% |
| Service | 44.1% | 13.6% | 18.9% | 16.1% |
| Farming, Forestry, Fishing | 29.1% | 1.8% | 4.8% | 3.3% |
| Precision Production, Craft | 47.7% | 11.6% | 13.8% | 12.7% |
| Operator, Fabricator, Laborer | 38.7% | 13.0% | 22.6% | 17.6% |
| Total | 52.3% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

**Income**

We next look at income, both at the household level and the individual level for full-time workers — defined as having worked 40 hours or more in the past week — of whom there are 6,269,372. The overall median income for households is considerably higher for naturalized than for non-citizen foreign-born residents — $38,010 vs. $32,000. Similarly, for individual income the difference is $25,000 vs. $18,000. Percentage distributions are included in Tables 6.3 and 6.4.

With one exception among household incomes under $15,000, the higher the income the greater the likelihood of being naturalized. This is true of both income measurements. For example, among individuals working full-time, only 38 percent of those earning less than $15,000 are citizens; the rate is 69 percent among those earning at least $75,000.

**Poverty Status**

Related to income is poverty status. The government establishes a base

Table 6.3

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Income | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Household Income | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Income | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Less than $15,000 | 51.7% | 18.1% | 20.0% | 18.9% |
| $15,000 - $29,999 | 48.4% | 20.8% | 26.1% | 23.3% |
| $30,000 - $49,999 | 52.1% | 24.6% | 26.6% | 25.5% |
| $50,000 - $74,999 | 58.6% | 19.5% | 16.3% | 18.0% |
| $75,000 - $99,999 | 63.6% | 8.8% | 6.0% | 7.5% |
| $100,000 or More | 66.1% | 8.2% | 5.0% | 6.7% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

Table 6.4

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Full-Time Worker Income | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Full-Time Worker Income | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Income | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Less than $15,000 | 38.2% | 22.1% | 38.9% | 30.1% |
| $15,000 - $29,999 | 51.8% | 37.3% | 37.8% | 37.6% |
| $30,000 - $49,999 | 63.8% | 25.7% | 15.9% | 21.0% |
| $50,000 - $74,999 | 68.5% | 9.1% | 4.5% | 6.9% |
| $75,000 or More | 69.1% | 5.9% | 2.9% | 4.4% |
| Total | 52.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

income below which individuals or families are considered to be in poverty. For some government assistance programs, persons or families with incomes of 200 percent or less above the poverty level also qualify. According to the data in Table 6.5, close to 12 percent of all foreign-born residents have incomes below the poverty level and another ten percent fall in the 100-150 percent category.[2] About 68 percent earn at least double the poverty level income. Non-citizens are considerable poorer than citizens. Almost twice as many non-citizens as those who are naturalized are considered poor. At the other extreme, three-quarters of citizens earn at least 200 percent of the poverty level, compared to only 59 percent of their non-citizen counterparts.

Table 6.5

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Poverty Status | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Poverty Status | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Poverty Status | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Below Poverty Level | 37.7% | 8.3% | 16.1% | 11.8% |
| 100-149% of Pov. Lev. | 43.6% | 8.1% | 12.3% | 10.1% |
| 150-199% of Pov. Lev. | 44.6% | 8.4% | 12.3% | 10.2% |
| 200% or More of Pov. Lev. | 59.8% | 75.2% | 59.3% | 67.9% |
| Total | 54.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

The naturalization rate rises as people earn above the poverty level. From less than 38 percent for the poor, the rate gradually increases to almost 60 percent for the least likely to be poor.[3]

Despite the fairly high level of poverty and near poverty, only 5.3 percent of all the foreign-born residents in the nation receive any kind of public assistance (although this does not include a substantial number who receive public assistance on behalf of their U.S.-born children). Even on this variable, however, non-citizens are less fortunate than those who have naturalized. Just over seven percent of non-citizens receive such aid, compared to under four percent for citizens (table not shown). As might be expected, those not receiving public assistance are far more likely to be citizens (55.0%).

**Household Type**

For this section, we divided all the people in our study into the types of households in which they reside (Table 6.6). Seven out of ten foreign-born residents lived in typical married-couple family households. Another 14 percent were in so-called non-family households. These include widowed and separated individuals and people who simply live alone. Over nine percent lived in male-headed households, compared to five percent living in female-headed households. A very small proportion live in group quarters (e.g., institutions of various types).

Table 6.6

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Type | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Household Type | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Household Type | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Group Quarters | 63.9% | 1.7% | 1.2% | 1.5% |
| Married-Couple | 54.3% | 70.5% | 70.0% | 70.3% |
| Female-Headed | 38.7% | 3.7% | 6.8% | 5.1% |
| Male-Headed | 47.2% | 8.3% | 10.9% | 9.5% |
| Non-Family | 62.9% | 15.9% | 11.1% | 13.7% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

[2] A recent report from the Census Bureau indicates that "about a quarter of the immigrants of the 1980s lived below the poverty level." See Spencer Rich, "A 20-Year High Tide of Immigration," *The Washington Post National Weekly*, Sept. 4-10, p. 30. This study refers to only to the 1980s and includes all immigrants, in contrast to the restricted universe of our study.

[3] It should be pointed out that 190,891 entries were missing on this question. Thus, our "universe" consists of 12,914,348 individuals — 6,973,474 citizens and 5,940,874 non-citizens.

Differences between citizens and non-citizens are not significant. For example, about 70 percent of citizens as well as non-citizens live in married-couple households. However, the proportion living in single-parent households, whether male or female, is higher for non-citizens, while in non-family households, the proportion is greater among citizens.

The naturalization rate is lowest among those living in female-headed households, a fact which may reflect the prevalence of poverty in such households. Those in married couple households are significantly more likely to be citizens, while those living in non-family households are most likely to be naturalized (with the exception of the minuscule number in group quarters). This may reflect age, as this category undoubtedly includes numerous widowed individuals.

Table 6.7

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Marital Status**

| Marital Status | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Marital Status | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Married | 54.5% | 69.4% | 68.6% | 69.0% |
| Widowed | 69.5% | 12.5% | 6.5% | 9.6% |
| Divorced/Separated | 50.6% | 9.4% | 10.8% | 10.2% |
| Single | 42.3% | 8.8% | 14.2% | 11.3% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

**Marital Status**

The data on marital status help explain some of the findings for households. Just under 70 percent of all individuals in our study are married and living together (Table 6.7). About ten percent are widowed, ten percent are divorced or separated, and 11 percent are single. Except for the widowed and the single, differences in distribution between citizens and non-citizens are insignificant. However, naturalized residents are twice as likely to be widowed as those who are not naturalized suggesting that the former are older. On the other hand, almost twice as many non-citizens are single as are citizens. Age undoubtedly helps explain this difference, as well.

Just as those living in non-family households are most likely to have naturalized, so are the widowed. On the other hand, the single are the least likely to be naturalized. Among those who are married, over 54 percent are naturalized.

**Language**

Seven out of ten respondents indicate that they speak English "well or very well" (Table 6.8).[4] The difference by whether a person is naturalized is very large. Whereas 57 percent of non-citizens speak English well or very well, that share rises to almost 84 percent among citizens.[5]

Table 6.8

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Ability to Speak English**

| Able to Speak English... | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by English Ability | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Very Well/Well | 59.4% | 83.7% | 57.0% | 70.3% |
| Not Well/Not at All | 27.4% | 16.3% | 43.0% | 29.7% |
| Total | 49.9% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

The naturalization rate is considerably higher among those who speak English well (59.4%) than among those who either do not speak English at all or speak it poorly (27.4 %). Bearing in mind that one of the requirements of acquiring citizenship involves some knowledge of the English language, these findings are not surprising.

What was surprising was the finding that three-quarters of all the foreign-born residents speak

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[4] A total of 3,178,804 respondents are missing from this question leaving a balance of 9,926,435 respondents, 50.1 percent of whom are non-citizens. Thus citizens are slightly underrepresented in this particular analysis.

[5] We do not include persons who report that they speak only English, so as to ensure that the analyses compare only differences in competency between persons for whom English is not the first language.

Table 6.9

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Language Spoken at Home | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language Spoken | Nat. Rate | Pct. Distribution by Language Spoken | | |
| | | Nat. | Not Nat. | Total |
| Other Language | 49.9% | 69.8% | 82.8% | 75.7% |
| English | 67.4% | 30.2% | 17.2% | 24.3% |
| Total | 54.1% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

a language other than English at home (Table 6.9). Even among naturalized citizens, almost 70 percent do not speak English at home. That rate rises to 83 percent among non-citizens.

This unexpected finding certainly suggests that the cultural adaptation process is far from complete. When we consider that a number of foreign born come from English-speaking countries, this indicates that the rate is even higher among those coming from non-English speaking sources.

Two-thirds of those who speak English at home are naturalized, compared to just under half for those who speak another language.

# VII. Year of Entry: The Overall Picture

As we have seen, a strong relationship exists between date of entry into the United States and naturalization rates — the earlier the entrance the higher the rate. It is thus possible that this variable may blur the relationships we have noted between various socio-economic variables and naturalization rates. It is theoretically possible that no true relationship exists between socio-economic variables and naturalization if date of entry is held constant.

### Educational Attainment

As Table 7.1 shows, however, the original relationship noted between education and naturalization remains after controlling for year of entry. Regardless of year of entry, the higher the education attained, the greater the likelihood of naturalization. Moreover, regardless of educational attainment, the longer the stay in the United States, the higher the naturalization rate.

Table 7.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Education and Year of Entry**

| Education | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| 0-11 Years | 21.7% | 37.1% | 73.0% | 43.5% |
| H.S. Grad. | 33.5% | 54.7% | 80.0% | 58.6% |
| Some College | 40.7% | 62.3% | 81.5% | 61.5% |
| College Grad.+ | 42.6% | 73.9% | 88.6% | 65.1% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.8% | 54.1% |

From these data, we conclude that both variables contribute to naturalization. It appears that year of entry is somewhat more powerful than educational attainment, although even with the passage of time the naturalization gap remains wide between the least- and most-educated. The combination of the two variables results in a powerful indicator of naturalization: close to 89 percent of all foreign-born college graduates who arrived prior to 1965 are citizens.

### Occupation

A somewhat similar pattern emerges here. Overall, those in the higher level white-collar occupations have the highest naturalization rates and those in farming/forestry/fishing have the lowest. The service occupations and the blue-collar occupations fall in between. This is true whether the foreign born moved to the United States before 1965 or after 1974 (Table 7.2).

The highest naturalization rate is among managers and professionals who entered before 1965 (84.9%); the lowest among those in farming/forestry/fishing who are relative newcomers (21.2%). However, over half of those in the latter category who have been in the country since before 1965 are citizens. This compares with 42 percent of the managers and professionals who arrived after 1974. Thus, once again, year of entry seems to have a stronger influence on naturalization than does occupation, although both contribute, and the gap between low- and high-level occupations persists over time.

Table 7.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Occupation and Year of Entry**

| Occupation | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Manager, Professional | 42.0% | 70.1% | 84.9% | 64.6% |
| Technical, Sales, Admin. | 42.5% | 64.1% | 79.7% | 60.2% |
| Service | 28.8% | 50.3% | 71.6% | 44.1% |
| Farming, Forestry, Fishing | 21.2% | 29.1% | 51.5% | 29.1% |
| Precision Production, Craft | 31.8% | 50.5% | 72.9% | 47.7% |
| Operator, Fabricator, Laborer | 26.7% | 42.9% | 66.7% | 38.7% |
| Total | 34.4% | 56.9% | 77.2% | 52.3% |

## Income

Table 7.3

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Full-Time Worker Income and Year of Entry**

| Full-Time Worker Income | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Less than $15,000 | 26.4% | 45.1% | 68.3% | 38.2% |
| $15,000 - $29,999 | 37.5% | 56.3% | 74.6% | 51.8% |
| $30,000 - $49,999 | 46.1% | 66.5% | 80.5% | 63.8% |
| $50,000 - $74,999 | 43.2% | 72.7% | 86.1% | 68.5% |
| $75,000 or More | 40.6% | 71.4% | 88.2% | 69.1% |
| Total | 35.1% | 57.5% | 77.1% | 52.1% |

We limit this analysis to those foreign-born individuals who are full-time workers, since a similar trend is noted for household income. Irrespective of earnings, the longer the time spent in the country the higher the naturalization rate (Table 7.3). However, some minor deviations from the usual pattern are noted. For example, among the newest immigrants, the naturalization rate is higher for persons earning between $30,000 and $75,000 than for those earning more than $75,000.

The rate is highest among those who arrived before 1965 and who earn over $75,000 (88.2%). It is lowest among the newest arrivals earning less than $15,000 (26.4%). Despite the strong impact of the passage of time, the gap between naturalization rates of the lowest and highest incomes remains — it is almost 20-points between the highest and lowest income groups among the pre-1965 immigrants.

Although duration of time in the country appears to be the most powerful factor, a look at these three socio-economic indicators together — education, occupation and income — shows that they are interrelated and continue to contribute to the naturalization rate despite the passage of time. Thus, we suspect that the highest naturalization rate would apply to college graduates who are managers or professionals, earn over $75,000 annually, and have lived in the United States since at least 1965. The number of such cases in our sample is far too small to calculate a rate, but it would undoubtedly be above 90 percent.

## Poverty

We have noted a difference in naturalization rates between the foreign born in poverty and those above poverty. After controlling for year of entry, the relationship remains. The poorer the individual, the less likely that person will apply for citizenship, regardless of length of residence (Table 7.4).

The highest naturalization rate is found among the "richest" (i.e., at least 200% above poverty) who arrived before 1965 (80.6%). The lowest is among the poorest (i.e., below the poverty level) who arrived since 1975 (22.7%).

Likewise, the proportion receiving public assistance is an indicator for how high the naturalization rate is. Irrespective of year of entry, individuals who do not receive such assistance are more likely to have been naturalized than those who do receive public assistance (Table 7.5).

Together, the data from these two tables indicate once again that, although year of entry re-

Table 7.4

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Poverty Status and Year of Entry**

| Poverty Status | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Below Poverty Level | 22.7% | 38.2% | 68.4% | 37.7% |
| 100-149% of Pov. Lev. | 24.1% | 38.8% | 75.3% | 43.6% |
| 150-199% of Pov. Lev. | 25.5% | 42.5% | 75.0% | 44.6% |
| 200% or More of Pov. Lev. | 37.0% | 58.5% | 80.6% | 59.8% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.6% | 54.0% |

Table 7.5

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Receipt of Public Assistance and Year of Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Public Assistance | Year of Entry | | | |
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| No | 32.3% | 53.9% | 80.0% | 55.0% |
| Yes | 22.3% | 34.5% | 64.0% | 38.6% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.8% | 54.1% |

mains the most dominant factor in determining whether one naturalizes or not, the relationship between income (with poverty as a surrogate measure) and naturalization is strong, even after controlling for year of entry.

**Household Type**

Earlier we noted differences in naturalization rates by household types. However, when we control for year of entry, these variations diminish. In all instances, the naturalization rate rises with time spent in the United States. Within year of entry categories, although the differences among household types shrink, they do not disappear (Table 7.6). In households headed by a single person, whether male or female, naturalization is less likely than in married-couple and non-family households.

Excluding group quarters, which is too small a category to consider, the highest naturalization rates are among non-family households who have been here since before 1965 (83.2%). The lowest rates are among female-headed households arriving after 1974 (25.4%). Among all who came after 1974, differences in naturalization are very small — ranging from the aforementioned 25.4 percent to 33.5 percent for married-couple households. Even among those who came before 1965, the range only goes from 71.5 percent for male or female-headed households to 83.2 percent for non-family households. Thus, from these data we cannot conclude that type of household is a significant predictor of naturalization. It remains obvious, however, that length of residence is the important variable.

**Marital Status**

The data on marital status complement, and help explain, those on household types. Again here, we find that any significant differences in naturalization are minimized when controlling for year of entry (Table 7.7).

Table 7.6

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Type and Year of Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Household Type | Year of Entry | | | |
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Group Quarters | 23.1% | 45.8% | 86.2% | 63.9% |
| Married-Couple | 33.5% | 54.4% | 78.4% | 54.3% |
| Female-Headed | 25.4% | 42.8% | 71.5% | 38.7% |
| Male-Headed | 28.4% | 47.0% | 71.5% | 47.2% |
| Non-Family | 28.1% | 53.0% | 83.2% | 62.9% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.8% | 54.1% |

Table 7.7

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Marital Status and Year of Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marital Status | Year of Entry | | | |
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Married | 33.6% | 54.7% | 78.7% | 54.5% |
| Widowed | 24.0% | 41.4% | 83.8% | 69.5% |
| Divorced/Separated | 28.6% | 49.0% | 74.0% | 50.6% |
| Single | 27.3% | 50.6% | 72.4% | 42.3% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.8% | 54.1% |

Overall, widowed foreign born have the highest rate. However, among the newest immigrants, married-couples have a higher rate and widowed persons have the lowest, though the differences are not large. This is also true of those coming during the 1965-1974 period. It is only among those coming prior to 1965 that the widowed individuals have the highest naturalization rate. But again, differences among the marital categories are modest. Together, these data confirm our previous suggestion that the high naturalization rate among widowed persons reflects their age and these data also demonstrate that marital status is not a very reliable predictor of naturalization. This lack of correlation was also noted in Wasem's analysis of the INS cohort study.[1]

**Language**

Overall there is a large difference in naturalization rates between those who speak English well or very well and those who either do not speak it at all or speak it poorly. That difference is maintained after controlling for year of entry. Irrespective of when a person entered the country, the ability to speak English "well or very well" increases the probability that one will naturalize (Table 7.8).

Here, too, length of residence in the United States is a major predictor of naturalization. Even among those who speak English well or very well, the naturalization rate is only 40 percent among the most recent arrivals, compared to almost 81 percent among those who arrived prior to 1965. Among those who speak English poorly or not at all, the naturalization rate rises from 18 percent to 52 percent with length of residence. Both variables — the ability to speak English and length of residence — thus contribute to raising the naturalization rate.

As noted above, we were surprised that so many foreign-born citizens spoke a language other than English at home. Equally unexpected is the fact that among the most recent arrivals, the naturalization rate is somewhat higher among those who speak a language other than English at home than among those who speak English at home — 32 percent vs. 29.7 percent (Table 7.9). It is only among those who have been here the longest that the English speakers exhibit a higher naturalization rate. Again, length of residence is important. In all instances, the naturalization rate goes up with time in the United States. On the other hand, it does appear that the language spoken in the home is not a very good predictor of whether a foreign-born resident will naturalize.

Table 7.8

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Ability to Speak English and Year of Entry**

| Able to Speak English... | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Very Well/Well | 40.3% | 61.5% | 80.7% | 59.4% |
| Not Well/Not at All | 18.2% | 30.6% | 52.3% | 27.4% |
| Total | 32.0% | 52.7% | 75.5% | 49.9% |

In sum, the length of time spent in the United States remains the most important determinant of naturalization. However, with the exception of household type and marital status, all other variables also play an important role in naturalization. Generally, higher income, education and occupation, together with the ability to speak English well, all contribute to raising the naturalization rate in conjunction with duration of stay in this country.

Table 7.9

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Language Spoken at Home and Year of Entry**

| Language Spoken | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
| Other Language | 32.0% | 52.7% | 75.5% | 49.9% |
| English | 29.7% | 54.1% | 83.6% | 67.4% |
| Total | 31.7% | 52.9% | 78.8% | 54.1% |

[1] Wasem, op.cit.

# VIII. Age at Entry into the United States

The close relationship between year of entry and naturalization rates is obvious. So too is the relationship between age at entry and naturalization. As Table 5.4 showed, 85 percent of those who entered as children age 15 and under prior to 1965 became citizens. Just under 61 percent of those who came at the same time but were age 45 or over are naturalized. Together, these two variables play an important role in determining naturalization rates.

Ideally, we would control for both of these variables simultaneously, but that would yield very small numbers given the size of our sample. Thus, in this section, we will follow the outline of the previous section and consider age at entry as a control variable while examining the relationship between the other variables and the naturalization rate.

### Educational Attainment

The data in Table 8.1 reaffirm the impact of increased education on the tendency to naturalize. Regardless of age at entry, the naturalization rate goes up with increased schooling. The impact of age at entry is less clear. Irrespective of education, the naturalization rate is considerably higher among those who entered as children than among any other age groups. Indeed, between ages 15 and 44, variations within educational levels are small. Only among those who came after age 44 is there some drop in naturalization, and even there, it is not particularly marked and undoubtedly reflects the fact that a number of retirees have come to live with their children. So age at entry is a factor, but mainly among children, while educational attainment remains a factor at all ages of entry.

Table 8.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Education and Age at Entry**

| Education | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| 0-11 Years | 72.8% | 32.5% | 38.0% | 26.8% |
| H.S. Grad. | 77.1% | 49.3% | 51.4% | 42.3% |
| Some College | 78.0% | 53.3% | 54.6% | 50.2% |
| College Grad.+ | 87.2% | 58.4% | 57.9% | 53.5% |
| Total | 77.5% | 45.0% | 47.9% | 34.8% |

### Occupation

The picture for occupation is almost identical to that for education (Table 8.2). The highest white-collar occupations exhibit the highest naturalization rates and farming/forestry/fishing and operators/fabricators/laborers exhibit the lowest. Slight variations are noted within the middle level occupations. Nevertheless, the impact of occupation on naturalization is clear. But no such obvious relationship is noted when looking at age at entry. Again, those who came as children have much higher naturalization rates than those who came at a later age.

Table 8.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Occupation and Age at Entry**

| Occupation | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Manager, Professional | 82.6% | 60.1% | 56.9% | 45.4% |
| Technical, Sales, Admin. | 74.6% | 55.6% | 54.3% | 45.4% |
| Service | 66.0% | 40.1% | 40.9% | 32.6% |
| Farming, Forestry, Fishing | 45.2% | 24.6% | 27.7% | 27.6% |
| Precision Production, Craft | 64.1% | 42.5% | 45.3% | 39.1% |
| Operator, Fabricator, Laborer | 54.7% | 34.5% | 37.7% | 29.4% |
| Total | 71.6% | 46.9% | 47.6% | 37.8% |

For example, 83 percent of managers and professionals who immigrated while they were children are citizens. Less than half of those in the same occupations who arrived after age 44 have naturalized. So, we reach the same conclusion as when examining educational attainment: age at entry is a factor, but mainly among children.

Table 8.3

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Full-Time Worker Income and Age at Entry**

| Full-Time Worker Income | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Less than $15,000 | 58.2% | 33.6% | 35.8% | 29.6% |
| $15,000 - $29,999 | 68.1% | 46.3% | 48.4% | 41.9% |
| $30,000 - $49,999 | 78.6% | 59.8% | 57.5% | 48.9% |
| $50,000 - $74,999 | 85.8% | 67.4% | 59.9% | 51.0% |
| $75,000 or More | 88.7% | 71.6% | 59.8% | 51.0% |
| Total | 70.8% | 47.1% | 47.8% | 37.4% |

**Income**

The relationship between education, occupation and income is very close. Thus, when looking at income of full-time workers and naturalization rates, the results are not unexpected (Table 8.3).

Coming to the United States as a child is a clear indicator of a high naturalization rate. That rate reaches 88.7 among those foreign-born residents earning $75,000 or more. Except for those in this high-income bracket, age at entry has little impact on naturalization. For those earning $75,000 or more, the naturalization rate remains quite high for those entering the country between ages 15 and 24. Then it falls quite rapidly.

So again we note that income is a definite contributor to naturalization. Age at entry, on the other hand, is only significant among those coming to the United States as children.

**Poverty**

Given the strong relationship between income and poverty, our findings here are not surprising (Table 8.4). Irrespective of age at entry, the further removed one is from poverty, the higher the naturalization rate. Except for those who came as children, differences by age at entry are not significant. For those who did come as children, a large majority are citizens. Even among those earning under the poverty level, two-thirds are citizens, and that rises to 80 percent among those earning at least 200 percent of the poverty level. Our conclusion is as before. Poverty status is definitely related to naturalization. Age at entry is mainly related among children.

A look at the data on public assistance yields similar results (table not shown). Those not receiving government help are much more likely to have become citizens than those receiving such aid. This is true across the board. However, only among those coming as children is there any perceptible difference in naturalization when age at entry is considered.

Table 8.4

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Poverty Status and Age at Entry**

| Poverty Status | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Below Poverty Level | 66.0% | 28.7% | 31.5% | 29.4% |
| 100-149% of Pov. Lev. | 73.8% | 29.4% | 35.5% | 33.3% |
| 150-199% of Pov. Lev. | 72.1% | 32.9% | 38.5% | 31.8% |
| 200% or More of Pov. Lev. | 79.9% | 52.8% | 53.6% | 37.2% |
| Total | 77.3% | 45.2% | 48.0% | 34.6% |

**Language**[1]

Three-quarters of the immigrants who came to the United States as children and speak English very well or well are naturalized, compared to only 48.7 percent of those who speak English poorly or not at all (Table 8.5). This nicely sums up how lan-

[1] Since household type and marital status contribute only modestly naturalization rates (as was noted earlier), they will not be included here. They will be reintroduced when examining the data country by country.

Table 8.5

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Ability to Speak English and Age at Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Able to Speak English... | Age at Entry | | | |
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Very Well/Well | 74.4% | 51.2% | 57.3% | 54.9% |
| Not Well/Not at All | 48.7% | 22.3% | 28.9% | 22.3% |
| Total | 71.2% | 43.5% | 47.5% | 34.1% |

guage competency contributes to naturalization. At all ages the rate is about double for those who speak the language fluently. Among those who came after reaching age 45, 22.3 percent of those who speak English poorly or not at all are citizens, compared to 54.9 percent among those who speak it well. Thus, language competency is an important contributor to increased naturalization rates. But again, age at entry is only meaningful for those coming as children. A big drop in naturalization rates follows and differences by age are slight.

A similar picture can be derived from examining the data on language spoken at home (Table 8.6). However, differences between those who speak English at home and those who don't are considerably smaller than the differences noted above. For example, among those who came as children, over 71 percent of those who speak another language at home are naturalized, compared to almost 86 percent among those who speak English. Again, the naturalization rates fall substantially for both groups if they entered after age 15.

Throughout this section, we have noted that, whereas the socio-economic and related variables play a strong role in determining naturalization rates, age at entry appears to be important only among those who came to this country as children. Now let us turn back to Table 5.4. Note that those coming as children exhibit high naturalization rates irrespective of when they arrived. However, they are highest among those who came prior to 1965 (85.5%). This suggests a close relationship between year of entry and age at entry. Table 8.7 looks at the data in Table 5.4 but turns them around to answer the question: when did these children come to the United States?

The answer is clear: age at entry is simply a surrogate for year of entry. No less than 82.5 percent of those who came as children arrived prior to 1965. Only 2.8 percent are relative newcomers. On the other hand, only 22.8 percent of those who came at age 45 or over came before 1965, while 46.9 percent came after 1974. These data explain, in large part, our findings in this section. Age at entry is only important as a contributor to naturalization among children, because most of these children arrived prior to 1965.

Table 8.6

| Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Language Spoken at Home and Age at Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Language Spoken | Age at Entry | | | |
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Other Language | 71.2% | 43.5% | 47.5% | 34.1% |
| English Only | 85.8% | 52.0% | 49.7% | 39.5% |
| Total | 77.5% | 45.0% | 47.9% | 34.8% |

The data in Table 8.8 reinforce our conclusion. Here we look at age at entry by age in 1990. Close to half (46.6%) of those who came here as children were 65 or over in 1990, a considerably

Table 8.7

| Age at Entry by Year of Entry | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Year of Entry | Age at Entry | | | |
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| 1975-84 | 2.8% | 34.0% | 33.9% | 46.9% |
| 1965-74 | 14.7% | 33.3% | 32.1% | 30.3% |
| Pre-1965 | 82.5% | 32.7% | 34.0% | 22.8% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

higher proportion than those who came at ages 15 to 45. However, among those who did come after reaching age 45, no less than 71.9 percent were 65 or over in 1990 and another 25.3 percent were between 55 and 64. This reaffirms our earlier suggestion that the lower naturalization rates among these foreign-born residents simply reflects the fact that they came late in life and thus are less likely to opt for citizenship.

Table 8.8

**Age at Entry by Age in 1990**

| Age in 1990 | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| 25-34 | 22.7% | 30.3% | 2.6% | -- |
| 35-44 | 16.5% | 33.5% | 23.7% | -- |
| 45-54 | 6.9% | 25.2% | 30.8% | 2.8% |
| 55-64 | 7.3% | 10.9% | 26.6% | 25.3% |
| 65 and + | 46.6% | 0.1% | 16.3% | 71.9% |
| Total | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% | 100.0% |

# IX. The Overall Country Picture

We now examine how immigrants from selected countries of origin fare regarding naturalization. From our special universe of foreign-born adults 25 years of age and over who arrived no later than 1985, we chose the foreign born from the top 15 countries of origin. These will be analyzed in some detail, as was done for the foreign born in general in previous chapters.

Table 9.1

**1990 Naturalization Rates and U.S. Foreign-Born Population for the Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| Country | Our Sample | | Total Foreign-Born Pop. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Nat. Rate | Pop. (000s) | Nat. Rate | Pop. (000s) |
| Mexico | 29.4% | 2,532 | 22.6% | 4,298 |
| Cuba | 56.2% | 723 | 51.0% | 737 |
| Canada | 60.3% | 668 | 54.1% | 745 |
| Philippines | 71.7% | 649 | 53.9% | 913 |
| Germany | 78.4% | 649 | 71.9% | 712 |
| United Kingdom | 58.7% | 538 | 49.7% | 640 |
| Italy | 79.2% | 518 | 75.7% | 581 |
| China | 64.6% | 355 | 44.0% | 530 |
| Korea | 57.6% | 333 | 40.7% | 568 |
| Poland | 75.1% | 311 | 62.4% | 388 |
| Vietnam | 59.5% | 304 | 42.7% | 543 |
| India | 49.8% | 272 | 34.9% | 450 |
| El Salvador | 21.7% | 246 | 15.3% | 465 |
| Jamaica | 50.5% | 206 | 38.3% | 334 |
| Domin. Repub. | 36.9% | 175 | 27.6% | 348 |

Table 9.1 indicates the top 15 countries and their naturalization rates both in our special sample and for the nation as a whole. Note that there are differences in order of size. This can be explained by high-level recent immigration (i.e., since 1985) and variations in age.

In the earlier section, we noted that year of entry is perhaps the most important variable in determining naturalization rates, although other socio-economic variables contributed significantly. Age in 1990 and age at time of entry, while apparently significant explanatory variables, were found to be, for the most part, surrogates for date of entry.

Nevertheless, in this section, we will concentrate on both date of entry and age at entry to determine and possibly explain differences in naturalization rates among countries of origin.

It is possible for a country of origin to exhibit a high naturalization rate simply because most of its immigrants to the United States arrived early. For example, according to our calculations, of the top 15 countries, Italy has the highest naturalization rate (79.2%) while El Salvador has the lowest (21.7). Most Italian immigrants arrived many years ago, while the opposite is true of Salvadorans. Table 9.2 points out the naturalization rates by year of entry for all 15 countries. This should give us a better idea of how countries rate, controlling for year of entry.

Among the foreign born who arrived after 1974, the highest naturalization rates are among Filipinos (58%) and Vietnamese (57.9%). These are the only two groups of the newest immigrants where over half have acquired citizenship. The two lowest rates are found among Canadians (14.8%) and those from the United Kingdom (15.7%). Among those who came to the United States between 1965 and

1974, the highest naturalization rates once again are among Filipinos (84.8%) and Vietnamese (84.2%). The lowest are among Mexicans (29.5%) and Canadians (31.7%). Finally, among the earliest arrivals, Koreans (92.4%) and Italians (90.7%) rank one and two at the top. Mexicans (48.3%) and Salvadorans (58.5%) are at the bottom of the list.

Even a cursory glance at Table 9.2 makes clear that year of entry can "contaminate" the true naturalization rate. Canada, for example, ranks fairly high overall, with a rate of 60.3 percent. Yet it is among the lowest among those who arrived since 1965. Vietnam, on the other hand, has a lower overall rate than Canada but scores very high among those coming since 1965. Table 9.3 lists the top 15 countries according to distribution by year of entry. This partially untangles a confused picture. Countries like Germany, Canada and Italy, for example, have very high proportions of their foreign-born populations who arrived before 1965, thereby inflating their overall naturalization rates. The opposite is true for other countries like Korea and the Philippines.

Table 9.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Country of Origin (Top 15) and Year of Entry**

| Country | Year of Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 |
| Mexico | 29.4% | 20.1% | 29.5% | 48.3% |
| Cuba | 56.2% | 19.5% | 52.6% | 80.4% |
| Canada | 60.3% | 14.8% | 31.7% | 72.8% |
| Philippines | 71.7% | 58.0% | 84.8% | 89.4% |
| Germany | 78.4% | 23.6% | 51.7% | 86.6% |
| United Kingdom | 58.7% | 15.7% | 41.2% | 76.3% |
| Italy | 79.2% | 30.5% | 54.6% | 90.7% |
| China | 64.6% | 41.7% | 78.0% | 90.0% |
| Korea | 57.6% | 42.9% | 83.5% | 92.4% |
| Poland | 75.1% | 37.1% | 64.9% | 89.4% |
| Vietnam | 59.5% | 57.9% | 84.2% | 66.1% |
| India | 49.8% | 35.9% | 68.8% | 75.5% |
| El Salvador | 21.7% | 15.8% | 38.4% | 58.5% |
| Jamaica | 50.5% | 32.3% | 62.0% | 80.9% |
| Domin. Repub. | 36.9% | 22.4% | 43.9% | 61.5% |

Table 9.3

**Percent Distribution in 1990 by Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| Country | 1975-84 | 1965-74 | Pre-1965 | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mexico | 46.3% | 31.0% | 22.7% | 100.0% |
| Cuba | 20.5% | 42.1% | 37.4% | 100.0% |
| Canada | 11.2% | 14.5% | 74.3% | 100.0% |
| Philippines | 51.0% | 35.4% | 13.6% | 100.0% |
| Germany | 6.6% | 11.6% | 81.8% | 100.0% |
| United Kingdom | 18.3% | 18.5% | 63.2% | 100.0% |
| Italy | 5.9% | 21.9% | 72.2% | 100.0% |
| China | 45.8% | 27.8% | 26.4% | 100.0% |
| Korea | 65.0% | 28.9% | 6.1% | 100.0% |
| Poland | 20.9% | 13.9% | 65.2% | 100.0% |
| Vietnam | 93.5% | 5.8% | 0.7% | 100.0% |
| India | 59.0% | 34.4% | 6.6% | 100.0% |
| El Salvador | 78.5% | 16.4% | 5.1% | 100.0% |
| Jamaica | 47.4% | 39.2% | 13.4% | 100.0% |
| Domin. Repub. | 46.2% | 37.4% | 16.4% | 100.0% |

To clarify this picture, we have prepared standardized naturalization rates for the 15 countries (Table 9.4). The distribution by year of entry for all countries (not just the top 15) is applied to each country's total foreign-born population in the United States. In that way, year of entry ceases to be a contaminating factor in determining the naturalization rates. We then applied the actual year of entry naturalization rates for each

country to this new synthetic distribution. When year of entry is eliminated as a factor, the highest "standardized" naturalization rate is that for Filipinos, followed by Koreans and Chinese. The lowest rates are for Mexicans, then Salvadorans and Canadians.

Standardized rates are synthetic, not real, rates. They simply "control" for a variable (in this case, year of entry) that blurs the overall naturalization picture. This does not deny the fact that, in general, actual rates of naturalization are higher for most European countries and lower for Latin American and Caribbean countries. Regardless of when a person came to the United States, a larger share of Europeans than Latin Americans are citizens.

Table 9.4

**Standardized 1990 Naturalization Rates: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| Country | Actual Rate | Standardized Rate |
|---|---|---|
| Mexico | 29.4% | 32.6% |
| Cuba | 56.2% | 49.9% |
| Canada | 60.3% | 40.0% |
| Philippines | 71.7% | 76.2% |
| Germany | 78.4% | 51.8% |
| United Kingdom | 58.7% | 44.1% |
| Italy | 79.2% | 58.3% |
| China | 64.6% | 68.5% |
| Korea | 57.6% | 71.2% |
| Poland | 75.1% | 61.3% |
| Vietnam | 59.5% | 67.7% |
| India | 49.8% | 58.7% |
| El Salvador | 21.7% | 37.0% |
| Jamaica | 50.5% | 57.5% |
| Domin. Repub. | 36.9% | 42.0% |

Table 9.5

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Age at Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| Country | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Mexico | 46.9% | 24.0% | 24.4% | 20.4% |
| Cuba | 77.4% | 64.6% | 52.1% | 29.0% |
| Canada | 77.8% | 36.6% | 36.9% | 28.8% |
| Philippines | 84.2% | 73.8% | 70.9% | 57.3% |
| Germany | 92.7% | 65.5% | 65.8% | 51.6% |
| United Kingdom | 81.8% | 45.1% | 40.5% | 29.0% |
| Italy | 91.6% | 71.8% | 63.3% | 41.9% |
| China | 91.2% | 78.9% | 63.8% | 33.7% |
| Korea | 88.1% | 65.7% | 56.5% | 21.5% |
| Poland | 92.0% | 64.4% | 64.1% | 49.8% |
| Vietnam | 78.6% | 65.9% | 56.4% | 35.0% |
| India | 73.2% | 51.2% | 50.0% | 22.5% |
| El Salvador | 45.0% | 21.4% | 19.5% | 12.0% |
| Jamaica | 65.6% | 45.7% | 48.7% | 45.9% |
| Domin. Repub. | 57.7% | 36.4% | 29.8% | 20.9% |
| All Others | 83.0% | 49.7% | 49.5% | 37.1% |

Let us now turn briefly to age at entry to note any possible variations among the top 15 countries of immigration. Looking at the big picture, age at entry appears to be important for naturalization only if one enters the country as a child. Without exception, the rate is considerably higher among those who came before reaching age 15 (Table 9.5). The rate is lowest among those who entered at age 45 or over.

Among the foreign-born children, the naturalization rate is especially high for those countries from which immigrants came some time ago: Germany, Poland and Italy. Again, those coming from the United Kingdom and Canada exhibit lower rates than other Europeans.

Now let us look at naturalization rates by age and year of entry by country of origin (Table 9.6). With a few exceptions, the pattern remains consistent: the

earlier the age at entry, the higher the naturalization rate; similarly, the earlier the year of entry, the higher the rate. Since age at entry is apparently a surrogate for year of entry, and given the importance of the latter variable, as we turn to socio-economic variables in forthcoming chapters, we will hold constant year of entry in an effort to get a truer picture of naturalization. While it would be ideal to control both age at and year of entry, the resulting small numbers for many countries would render the analysis meaningless.

Table 9.6

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Age at Entry and Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| Country | Year of Entry | Age at Entry | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0-14 | 15-24 | 25-44 | 45 and + |
| Mexico: | 1975-84 | 22.8% | 19.5% | 20.8% | 19.5% |
| | 1965-74 | 37.4% | 28.1% | 25.5% | 19.7% |
| | Pre-1965 | 58.3% | 37.3% | 33.8% | 27.5% |
| Cuba: | 1975-84 | 55.0% | 25.4% | 20.9% | 12.6% |
| | 1965-74 | 67.7% | 63.4% | 52.4% | 28.3% |
| | Pre-1965 | 86.1% | 83.9% | 76.8% | 62.8% |
| Canada: | 1975-84 | 29.6% | 17.0% | 11.9% | 16.6% |
| | 1965-74 | 41.9% | 26.7% | 26.9% | 27.4% |
| | Pre-1965 | 81.3% | 49.2% | 53.5% | 52.4% |
| Philippines: | 1975-84 | 73.5% | 59.6% | 58.2% | 53.4% |
| | 1965-74 | 82.4% | 86.1% | 86.5% | 72.8% |
| | Pre-1965 | 87.4% | 93.3% | 90.3% | 76.8% |
| Germany: | 1975-84 | 52.7% | 22.1% | 21.8% | 29.4% |
| | 1965-74 | 72.1% | 48.5% | 45.6% | 39.3% |
| | Pre-1965 | 93.8% | 76.0% | 79.6% | 65.6% |
| United Kingdom: | 1975-84 | 33.9% | 17.7% | 13.8% | 15.2% |
| | 1965-74 | 47.6% | 37.7% | 41.5% | 33.0% |
| | Pre-1965 | 86.1% | 60.3% | 63.3% | 48.2% |
| Italy: | 1975-84 | 32.3% | 33.9% | 28.9% | 27.8% |
| | 1965-74 | 60.2% | 60.0% | 52.1% | 34.1% |
| | Pre-1965 | 95.0% | 87.3% | 80.3% | 57.0% |
| China: | 1975-84 | 82.2% | 52.8% | 49.0% | 26.0% |
| | 1965-74 | 87.6% | 89.9% | 78.1% | 53.3% |
| | Pre-1965 | 91.8% | 94.3% | 86.9% | 60.4% |
| Korea: | 1975-84 | 80.0% | 54.3% | 43.0% | 16.9% |
| | 1965-74 | 89.8% | 83.8% | 84.6% | 51.8% |
| | Pre-1965 | 90.8% | 94.7% | 92.2% | 71.6%* |
| Poland: | 1975-84 | 44.3% | 39.1% | 37.9% | 29.7% |
| | 1965-74 | 68.9% | 70.6% | 62.8% | 52.6% |
| | Pre-1965 | 93.7% | 86.8% | 83.2% | 71.0% |
| Vietnam: | 1975-84 | 78.3% | 64.2% | 55.5% | 34.6% |
| | 1965-74 | 90.2% | 84.8% | 79.9% | 82.4% |
| | Pre-1965 | 60.6% | 79.3%* | 78.1%* | 0.0%* |
| India: | 1975-84 | 48.9% | 37.5% | 37.7% | 18.4% |
| | 1965-74 | 76.3% | 66.6% | 70.6% | 47.4% |
| | Pre-1965 | 78.2% | 74.3% | 75.1% | 65.7% |
| El Salvador: | 1975-84 | 23.1% | 16.6% | 15.2% | 10.0% |
| | 1965-74 | 48.9% | 40.9% | 34.1% | 16.0% |
| | Pre-1965 | 58.6% | 63.8% | 55.5% | 45.2%* |
| Jamaica: | 1975-84 | 40.3% | 31.9% | 31.1% | 34.6% |
| | 1965-74 | 60.2% | 58.5% | 65.8% | 61.4% |
| | Pre-1965 | 84.4% | 74.2% | 80.8% | 71.5% |
| Domin. Repub.: | 1975-84 | 34.3% | 27.0% | 18.6% | 15.7% |
| | 1965-74 | 54.6% | 42.9% | 38.5% | 26.5% |
| | Pre-1965 | 69.2% | 55.2% | 59.3% | 43.0%* |

# X. Educational Attainment

We have already noted a strong relationship between educational attainment and naturalization. Not only are naturalization rates higher with more education, those who naturalize have more schooling than those who do not. Even after controlling for year of entry, the relationship remains strong. Irrespective of year of entry, the higher the schooling, the higher the naturalization rate. And the earlier the arrival in the United States, the higher the rate. Although year of entry is a stronger contributor to increased naturalization, educational attainment also plays an important role. Now, we look at how this apparently robust relationship is maintained when combined with country of origin data.

Table 10.1 shows the naturalization rates for each of the top 15 countries by level of school completed.[1] We also include the data for "all other" countries. The expected relationship between education and naturalization is not found in all countries of origin; indeed, for all selected European countries and Canada, no relationship is observed. However, for all other countries of origin, whether in Asia or in Latin America and the Caribbean, a strong positive relationship is noted: the higher the education, the higher the naturalization rate. The Philippines is a minor exception. There the rate peaks at "some college" and falls slightly for college graduates.

Some of the increases in naturalization are quite substantial. Among Cubans, for example, the rate rises from 35.7 percent for those with less than a high school education to 86.9 percent for college graduates. Rates for those born in Vietnam climb from 36.1 percent to 87.8 percent — the highest naturalization rate of any country.

Table 10.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Educational Attainment: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Education | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0-11 Yrs. | H.S. Grad. | Some Col. | Col. Grad. | Total |
| EUROPE | Germany | 80.5% | 76.7% | 77.2% | 80.4% | 78.4% |
| | Italy | 78.3% | 80.0% | 79.6% | 83.9% | 79.2% |
| | Poland | 76.2% | 71.3% | 75.1% | 77.6% | 75.1% |
| | United Kingdom | 67.4% | 60.3% | 55.2% | 53.1% | 58.7% |
| ASIA | China | 51.0% | 66.9% | 75.8% | 77.5% | 64.6% |
| | India | 29.0% | 44.0% | 50.0% | 53.7% | 49.8% |
| | Korea | 43.4% | 52.1% | 64.1% | 66.0% | 57.6% |
| | Philippines | 60.7% | 72.8% | 76.2% | 73.2% | 71.7% |
| | Vietnam | 36.1% | 59.0% | 73.3% | 87.8% | 59.5% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 64.0% | 61.6% | 56.9% | 57.7% | 60.3% |
| | El Salvador | 17.6% | 24.1% | 33.8% | 34.0% | 21.7% |
| | Mexico | 25.8% | 37.8% | 42.7% | 48.6% | 29.4% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 35.7% | 60.0% | 74.3% | 86.9% | 56.2% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 27.8% | 41.5% | 52.2% | 62.9% | 36.9% |
| | Jamaica | 46.3% | 47.8% | 51.6% | 60.3% | 50.5% |
| | All Others | 51.9% | 58.6% | 59.1% | 66.4% | 57.2% |
| | Total | 43.5% | 58.6% | 61.5% | 65.1% | 54.1% |

[1] Beginning with this Table, we present the countries in geographical order rather than population order. The geographical entities are: Europe, Asia, North America, Caribbean, All Other.

Among college graduates, naturalization rates are highest among the aforementioned Vietnamese and Cubans, followed by Italians. The lowest rates are found among Salvadorans (34%), Mexicans (48.6%) and Britons (53.1%). Interestingly, the naturalization rate among college graduates from predominantly English-speaking countries (i.e., the United Kingdom, India, Canada) is quite low. At the other educational extreme, those with less than a high school education, the highest naturalization rates are found among those from Germany, Italy and Poland, while the lowest are among Salvadorans, Mexicans and Dominicans.

From these data, it is apparent that the overall relationship between educational attainment and naturalization is weak or absent among the older sources of immigration — Europe and Canada. But that is more than compensated for by the strong correlation among today's sources of immigration — Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. The policy relevance, therefore, of the education/naturalization connection remains.

At least two other factors are involved here: year of entry and educational attainment differences among the countries of origin. Table 10.2 shows

Table 10.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Educational Attainment and Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Year of Entry | Education | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 0-11 Yrs. | H.S. Grad. | Some Col. | Col. Grad. | Total |
| EUROPE | Germany: | 1975-84 | 27.4% | 25.5% | 24.3% | 19.4% | 23.6% |
| | | 1965-74 | 47.6% | 49.0% | 53.9% | 55.5% | 51.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 84.9% | 84.8% | 86.8% | 92.3% | 86.6% |
| | Italy: | 1975-84 | 26.7% | 36.9% | 29.0% | 32.8% | 30.5% |
| | | 1965-74 | 48.0% | 58.8% | 65.5% | 75.7% | 54.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 89.5% | 92.0% | 92.7% | 95.0% | 90.7% |
| | Poland: | 1975-84 | 27.4% | 31.5% | 43.0% | 46.5% | 37.1% |
| | | 1965-74 | 50.5% | 63.8% | 74.0% | 87.0% | 64.9% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 86.5% | 90.4% | 93.6% | 96.2% | 89.4% |
| | United Kingdom: | 1975-84 | 11.7% | 16.2% | 17.3% | 14.8% | 15.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 33.8% | 36.2% | 40.4% | 49.8% | 41.2% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 77.5% | 74.1% | 75.2% | 81.1% | 76.3% |
| ASIA | China: | 1975-84 | 30.0% | 49.9% | 58.9% | 47.3% | 41.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 61.1% | 80.2% | 87.5% | 92.7% | 78.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 82.7% | 90.0% | 93.9% | 97.1% | 90.0% |
| | India: | 1975-84 | 21.8% | 35.1% | 41.3% | 37.8% | 35.9% |
| | | 1965-74 | 49.0% | 63.1% | 65.2% | 71.2% | 68.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 65.4% | 68.6% | 68.2% | 79.1% | 75.5% |
| | Korea: | 1975-84 | 29.0% | 41.6% | 51.5% | 47.7% | 42.9% |
| | | 1965-74 | 71.5% | 78.0% | 86.8% | 89.7% | 83.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 86.5% | 92.0% | 91.7% | 95.5% | 92.4% |
| | Philippines: | 1975-84 | 47.7% | 61.4% | 63.5% | 57.6% | 58.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 69.2% | 82.4% | 85.4% | 89.4% | 84.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 78.1% | 91.0% | 96.5% | 94.6% | 89.4% |
| | Vietnam: | 1975-84 | 34.2% | 56.7% | 72.6% | 87.5% | 57.9% |
| | | 1965-74 | 74.0% | 86.6% | 89.0% | 91.0% | 84.2% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 37.9%* | 63.0%* | 91.8%* | 94.5%* | 66.1% |
| N/C AMERICA | Canada: | 1975-84 | 13.3% | 16.6% | 13.8% | 15.2% | 14.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 21.8% | 29.3% | 34.9% | 37.2% | 31.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 72.3% | 72.2% | 70.5% | 77.8% | 72.8% |
| | El Salvador: | 1975-84 | 15.0% | 16.1% | 19.1% | 17.3% | 15.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 26.5% | 44.7% | 58.0% | 67.4% | 38.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 46.0% | 56.2% | 72.5% | 80.3% | 58.5% |
| | Mexico: | 1975-84 | 19.3% | 23.0% | 23.4% | 23.1% | 20.1% |
| | | 1965-74 | 25.7% | 38.7% | 42.9% | 48.1% | 29.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 41.0% | 58.9% | 65.1% | 75.5% | 48.3% |
| CARIBBEAN | Cuba: | 1975-84 | 11.2% | 23.2% | 34.3% | 47.5% | 19.5% |
| | | 1965-74 | 33.1% | 58.5% | 74.2% | 85.2% | 52.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 65.0% | 78.6% | 88.0% | 95.0% | 80.4% |
| | Domin. Repub.: | 1975-84 | 16.6% | 25.9% | 33.4% | 42.5% | 22.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 32.7% | 48.8% | 62.4% | 69.7% | 43.9% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 51.5% | 66.9% | 73.6% | 84.6% | 61.5% |
| | Jamaica: | 1975-84 | 26.9% | 29.2% | 36.9% | 40.7% | 32.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 58.2% | 61.6% | 61.5% | 68.8% | 62.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 75.9% | 80.7% | 85.6% | 84.9% | 80.9% |
| | All Others: | 1975-84 | 22.3% | 32.5% | 37.0% | 39.5% | 32.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 47.4% | 57.2% | 62.2% | 71.1% | 58.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 83.0% | 83.1% | 83.6% | 89.4% | 84.3% |
| | Total: | 1975-84 | 21.7% | 33.5% | 40.7% | 42.6% | 31.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 37.1% | 54.7% | 62.3% | 73.9% | 52.9% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 73.0% | 80.0% | 81.5% | 88.6% | 78.8% |

the naturalization rates for the top 15 countries and "all others", controlling for both year of entry and educational attainment.

Looking first at those who entered most recently, the pattern of increased naturalization with more schooling is generally present, with exceptions here and there. Among those coming from European countries and Canada, education does not play a very important role in determining citizenship. Poland is an exception. The naturalization rate for Britons and Canadians is especially low, not withstanding the level of education attained. The ability to speak English apparently is not a factor in determining naturalization, at least among these mostly English-speaking people who are recent arrivals. The highest rates are among immigrants from Asian sources. Vietnamese rates climb progressively with increased education, reaching 87.5 percent among those with at least a college degree. The four other Asian sources exhibit increased naturalization with more education, but that growth peaks among those who have had only some college.

Among Latin American and Caribbean sources, he higher the education, the higher the rate, in general. The pattern is clearer here than among those coming from Europe or Canada. Cuba's naturalization rate, for example, rises from 11.2 to 47.5 percent with educational attainment. Educational attainment and naturalization rates are closely related among the foreign born who entered the country between 1965 and 1974. Rates go up as schooling goes up in all these countries, except Jamaica, which is a minor exception. China (92.7%), Vietnam (91.0%) and Korea (89.7%) exhibited the highest naturalization rates among the most educated. Canadians with a college education (37.2%) have by far the lowest rate, followed by Mexicans (48.1%) and Britons (49.8%). We should bear in mind that, by 1990, these individuals had been in the United States at least 15 years.

Among the least educated who entered during the 1965-74 period, Canadians (21.8%) have the lowest naturalization rate, followed by Mexicans (25.7%) and Salvadorans (26.5%).

- Turning now to the oldest (in year of entry) immigrants, the expected relationship between educational attainment and naturalization holds for most countries of origin. However, since it is already high, even for the least educated, in all countries of origin except those in Latin America and the Caribbean, differences by education are not great. Italy, for example, rises from 89.5 percent to 95 percent; China from 82.7 percent to 97.1 percent. It should be noted, however, that, even among these earlier arrivals, the naturalization rate for those coming from Canada and the United Kingdom falls below that for those coming from European countries or from Asia and even from some Caribbean sources.

The rate remains quite low among the least educated coming from this continent, but it rises significantly among the most educated. For example, 95 percent of college-educated Cubans who arrived before 1965 are naturalized. Three-quarters of similarly educated early arrivals from Mexico are naturalized, though they exhibit the lowest rate in that category.

In sum, controlling for educational attainment and year of entry has refined some of our assumptions about the causes of naturalization. Asian naturalization rates are particularly noteworthy, while those for English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom and Canada are unexpectedly low. The data for the 15 countries do not negate the original relationships among these variables, but they do clarify and explain some of them.

However, one other question remains. How do these countries of origin rate by educational attainment? As we noted earlier, year of entry could effect the overall naturalization rate for a country of origin if most of its people came either very early or recently. Similarly, since increased schooling leads to higher rates of naturalization, it follows that dif-

Table 10.3

**Distribution of Foreign-Born Population in 1990 by Educational Attainment: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Education | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 0-11 Yrs. | H.S. Grad. | Some Col. | Col. Grad. | Total |
| EUROPE | Germany | 24.0% | 30.6% | 26.9% | 18.5% | 100.0% |
| | Italy | 61.5% | 20.5% | 9.9% | 8.1% | 100.0% |
| | Poland | 44.1% | 24.1% | 16.9% | 14.9% | 100.0% |
| | United Kingdom | 19.3% | 31.2% | 28.2% | 21.3% | 100.0% |
| ASIA | China | 41.6% | 15.3% | 15.1% | 30.0% | 100.0% |
| | India | 10.2% | 9.0% | 12.6% | 68.2% | 100.0% |
| | Korea | 20.2% | 24.3% | 21.7% | 33.8% | 100.0% |
| | Philippines | 17.6% | 14.0% | 26.4% | 42.0% | 100.0% |
| | Vietnam | 37.5% | 17.0% | 27.8% | 17.7% | 100.0% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 28.3% | 25.6% | 25.6% | 20.5% | 100.0% |
| | El Salvador | 64.8% | 17.2% | 13.7% | 4.3% | 100.0% |
| | Mexico | 75.8% | 11.7% | 9.5% | 3.0% | 100.0% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 44.9% | 19.1% | 20.0% | 16.0% | 100.0% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 57.5% | 19.2% | 16.0% | 7.3% | 100.0% |
| | Jamaica | 30.0% | 26.0% | 27.4% | 16.5% | 100.0% |
| | All Others | 32.6% | 21.5% | 22.0% | 23.9% | 100.0% |
| | Total | 41.5% | 19.7% | 19.4% | 19.4% | 100.0% |

ferent levels of education by country of origin would effect naturalization rates in a similar manner. Table 10.3 summarizes these educational data for the top 15 countries.

Substantial differences in educational attainment exist by country of origin. Indians stand alone, far above all other countries, with over two-thirds of these foreign-born residents having at least a college degree. Filipinos, with 42 percent having such schooling, come in second, Koreans (33.8%) third and China (30%) fourth. These high levels of education among Asian immigrants undoubtedly contribute to their relatively high naturalization rates, since most of them did not arrive early as did many Europeans and Canadians.

The lowest rates for foreign born having college degrees come from Latin American and Caribbean countries. Only three percent of foreign-born Mexicans have college degrees, followed by Salvadorans (4.3%) and Dominicans (7.3%). By the same token, 75 percent of Mexicans and 65 percent of Salvadorans have less than a high-school education.

Overall, while differences by countries of origin are significant, the conclusion noted in an earlier chapter still stands, though it has been greatly refined. The higher the education and the longer the stay in the United States, the higher the naturalization rate, with the country-specific exceptions noted here.

# XI. Occupation

In an earlier section we observed a fairly strong relationship between occupational status and naturalization. Immigrants in higher-level jobs tend to naturalize more than those holding blue-collar positions. After holding year of entry constant, the same relationship is noted.

We observed that there is undoubtedly a relationship between educational attainment and occupational status. Thus, the relationship between occupation and naturalization may simply reflect that between education and naturalization. As we saw in the preceding chapter, when we look at these variables by country of origin, certain differentials appear and some are unexpected.

Table 11.1 shows the naturalization rates for the top 15 countries by occupational status. Since our universe is limited to people in the labor force, the numbers for some countries may be too small (i.e., less than 1,000) to arrive at any conclusion. An asterisk (*) will accompany all such data.

In some countries, notably Europe and Canada, variations by occupation are very small. For example, among professionals coming from the United Kingdom, 48.8 percent are naturalized, compared to 46.1 percent among laborers. The variation by occupation is somewhat larger among Asian countries and largest among Latin American and the Caribbean sources. For example, among those born in Cuba, 84.2 percent of professionals are naturalized citizens, compared to only 41.3 percent among laborers born in Cuba. Somewhat similar patterns

Table 11.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Occupation: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Occupation | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Manager/ Profess. | Tech., Sales, Admin. | Service | Farming, Forestry, Fishing | Prec. Product., Craft | Operator, Fabric., Laborer |
| EUROPE | Germany | 77.8% | 75.1% | 68.7% | 74.5% | 71.3% | 73.5% |
| | Italy | 79.3% | 80.4% | 71.5% | 68.2% | 71.0% | 68.9% |
| | Poland | 82.4% | 75.4% | 50.6% | 68.3%* | 59.3% | 50.5% |
| | United Kingdom | 48.8% | 50.6% | 45.7% | 49.6% | 46.5% | 46.1% |
| ASIA | China | 79.1% | 75.5% | 57.9% | 61.1%* | 70.8% | 61.2% |
| | India | 58.0% | 48.5% | 42.6% | 46.7%* | 47.4% | 41.8% |
| | Korea | 71.5% | 61.2% | 59.5% | 43.1%* | 52.6% | 55.2% |
| | Philippines | 76.1% | 74.3% | 67.8% | 63.7% | 75.9% | 69.2% |
| | Vietnam | 86.4% | 78.5% | 60.0% | 37.3% | 61.3% | 53.1% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 50.0% | 48.0% | 51.3% | 54.8% | 48.2% | 50.9% |
| | El Salvador | 33.0% | 31.3% | 19.7% | 17.7%* | 22.0% | 18.2% |
| | Mexico | 46.3% | 40.7% | 26.8% | 22.5% | 28.3% | 25.6% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 84.2% | 73.1% | 49.0% | 29.9% | 50.2% | 41.3% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 57.1% | 50.2% | 36.8% | 51.4%* | 39.1% | 30.0% |
| | Jamaica | 58.0% | 51.5% | 44.4% | 46.1%* | 44.0% | 40.2% |
| | All Others | 62.5% | 58.9% | 45.3% | 40.4% | 52.8% | 42.8% |

are noted in other Latin American and Caribbean countries of origin.

Overall, the relationship between occupational status and naturalization rates is less powerful than that between educational status and naturalization.

When looking at education, we found interesting variations by year of entry. That variable remains the most powerful predictor of naturalization. Perhaps the lack of powerful correlation between occupation and naturalization will be explained as we control for year of entry (Table 11.2). (Because of the small number of cases in the "farming, forestry, fishing" occupational category, it is deleted from further discussions.)

Looking first at those persons who came to the United States after 1974, only the three Caribbean sources and Poland exhibit a

Table 11.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Occupation and Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Year of Entry | Occupation | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Man./Prof. | Tech., Sales, Ad. | Service | Prec. Prod., Craft | Op., Fabr., Laborer |
| EUROPE | Germany: | 1975-84 | 21.5% | 26.7% | 25.0% | 24.9%* | 28.3%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 53.5% | 54.5% | 55.9% | 48.6% | 54.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 89.8% | 85.1% | 78.1% | 78.8% | 80.8% |
| | Italy: | 1975-84 | 35.6% | 35.5% | 32.4% | 30.7% | 22.8%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 65.5% | 66.7% | 55.8% | 57.3% | 54.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 93.4% | 91.9% | 89.0% | 87.7% | 86.5% |
| | Poland: | 1975-84 | 54.0% | 46.9% | 30.2% | 35.5% | 28.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 87.2% | 74.5% | 51.8% | 66.4% | 54.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 95.6% | 90.7% | 78.1% | 84.4% | 75.9% |
| | United Kingdom: | 1975-84 | 15.7% | 15.3% | 13.4%* | 13.6%* | 18.9%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 47.3% | 40.7% | 37.0% | 36.7% | 35.3% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 74.1% | 70.4% | 62.9% | 69.9% | 63.2% |
| ASIA | China: | 1975-84 | 49.6% | 55.6% | 41.9% | 55.7% | 46.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 92.3% | 90.4% | 75.2% | 89.0% | 75.9% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 97.4% | 95.9% | 89.0% | 91.5% | 92.0% |
| | India: | 1975-84 | 41.1% | 37.3% | 33.6% | 37.4% | 34.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 73.7% | 67.1% | 61.1% | 76.0% | 71.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 79.4% | 76.0% | 60.0%* | 81.2%* | 64.7%* |
| | Korea: | 1975-84 | 53.3% | 48.7% | 46.0% | 41.1% | 41.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 91.3% | 86.1% | 81.6% | 80.2% | 82.2% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 98.1% | 89.4% | 97.3% | 91.4%* | 89.2%* |
| | Philippines: | 1975-84 | 57.0% | 62.1% | 57.6% | 65.9% | 58.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 90.0% | 87.4% | 79.1% | 84.7% | 81.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 96.1% | 94.5% | 89.2% | 95.7% | 89.0% |
| | Vietnam: | 1975-84 | 85.5% | 77.5% | 58.3% | 60.9% | 52.1% |
| | | 1965-74 | 93.8% | 92.5% | 79.7% | 77.0%* | 75.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 90.9%* | 95.5%* | 72.6%* | 18.1%* | 8.5%* |
| N/C AMERICA | Canada: | 1975-84 | 14.3% | 14.3% | 15.3%* | 16.5%* | 12.7%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 33.4% | 29.2% | 37.9% | 35.0% | 38.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 70.0% | 62.4% | 62.0% | 59.3% | 61.0% |
| | El Salvador: | 1975-84 | 18.9% | 19.0% | 15.8% | 17.0% | 14.6% |
| | | 1965-74 | 54.8% | 56.0% | 33.5% | 42.3% | 35.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 69.5% | 70.5% | 52.8%* | 61.4%* | 55.0%* |
| | Mexico: | 1975-84 | 22.5% | 25.4% | 19.7% | 20.1% | 20.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 44.8% | 40.0% | 29.3% | 29.9% | 28.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 67.3% | 60.9% | 47.9% | 50.5% | 41.1% |
| CARIBBEAN | Cuba: | 1975-84 | 44.9% | 33.7% | 15.8% | 17.0% | 16.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 82.3% | 72.0% | 52.0% | 54.9% | 43.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 92.7% | 87.9% | 74.1% | 77.9% | 74.5% |
| | Domin. Repub.: | 1975-84 | 38.4% | 29.9% | 20.9% | 23.7% | 20.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 60.5% | 59.1% | 47.8% | 52.8% | 38.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 78.0% | 72.4% | 60.8% | 52.7%* | 55.1% |
| | Jamaica: | 1975-84 | 40.0% | 35.5% | 27.7% | 30.5% | 26.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 67.4% | 66.1% | 60.9% | 59.8% | 53.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 86.1% | 79.3% | 76.2% | 68.4%* | 72.4% |
| | All Others: | 1975-84 | 40.7% | 39.8% | 28.0% | 33.7% | 27.1% |
| | | 1965-74 | 69.2% | 65.2% | 53.5% | 59.5% | 50.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 87.3% | 84.0% | 76.5% | 78.6% | 76.2% |

significant relationship between occupational status and naturalization. Cuban professionals, for example, have a naturalization rate of 44.9 percent, while Cuban laborers only have a rate of 16.7 percent. With these four exceptions, differences by occupational status are quite minor and sometimes non-existent.

Among the highest economic positions, those coming from Canada, the United Kingdom and El Salvador have the lowest naturalization rates; those from Vietnam, the Philippines and Poland the highest. The 85.5 percent rate for Vietnamese professionals is especially remarkable.

Overall, recent immigrants from the United Kingdom, Canada and most Latin American and Caribbean countries are less likely to become citizens than those from other European countries and Asia. Those newcomers from Vietnam and the Philippines do especially well insofar as naturalization is concerned.

A somewhat similar picture emerges among those coming to the United States between 1965 and 1974. No strong pattern is noted except among the Caribbean countries of origin and to a certain extent, China and Poland. For most countries, professionals have higher naturalization rates than others, but differences are modest. Indeed, for those from the United Kingdom and Germany, the rate is higher for laborers than for professionals.

For professionals, the highest naturalization rates among those coming between 1965 and 1974 are found among Vietnamese (93.8%), Chinese (92.3%) and Koreans (91.3%). Canada (33.4%), Mexico (44.8%) and the United Kingdom (47.3%) have the lowest rates. At the other end of the occupational ladder, Korea (82.2%), the Philippines (81.5%) and China(75.9%) have the highest rates of naturalization, while Mexico (28.4%,) the United Kingdom (35.3%) and Canada (38.1%) have the lowest.

Overall, and somewhat overgeneralized, the United Kingdom, Canada and Mexico have the lowest rates of naturalization among those coming between 1965 and 1974. People coming from other Latin American and Caribbean sources do about as well as those coming from the other European countries, and those from Asia have the highest naturalization rates.

A clearer, though still modest, pattern is noted among the earliest arrivals. With one minor exception (El Salvador), professionals exhibit the highest naturalization rates in all countries. Furthermore, in most countries (where the number of cases exceeds 1,000), laborers have the lowest rates.

Early-arriving (before 1965) professionals coming from Korea (98.1%), China (97.4%) and Poland (95.6%) have the highest naturalization rates, while those from Mexico (67.3%), El Salvador (69.5%) and Canada (70.0%) have the lowest. Among laborers, China (92.0), the Philippines (89.0) and Italy (86.5%) have the highest rates, while Mexico (41.1%), the Dominican Republic (55.1%) and Canada (61.0%) are at the bottom of the list.

As we did for educational attainment, we look briefly at the variations in occupations by country of origin (Table 11.3). Although the relationship between occupation and naturalization, even after controlling for year of entry, is not particularly great, variations in occupations may explain some of the differences.

India ranks first in the proportion of professionals; this is to be expected given its high percentage of college graduates. The United Kingdom and Canada rank second and third. Yet, as we have seen, their naturalization rates are relatively low. Those

Table 11.3

**Distribution of Foreign-Born Population in 1990 by Occupation: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Occupation | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Manager/ Profess. | Tech., Sales, Admin. | Service | Farming, Forestry, Fishing | Prec. Product., Craft | Operator, Fabric., Laborer | Total |
| EUROPE | Germany | 33.3% | 32.7% | 12.8% | 0.9% | 11.9% | 8.4% | 100.0% |
| | Italy | 19.9% | 20.7% | 17.5% | 1.7% | 21.8% | 18.4% | 100.0% |
| | Poland | 23.5% | 20.9% | 16.1% | 0.6%* | 20.0% | 18.9% | 100.0% |
| | United Kingdom | 41.2% | 34.5% | 9.8% | 0.7% | 8.2% | 5.6% | 100.0% |
| ASIA | China | 31.7% | 23.5% | 23.5% | 0.5% | 6.5% | 14.3% | 100.0% |
| | India | 54.7% | 29.3% | 4.4% | 0.6% | 4.2% | 6.8% | 100.0% |
| | Korea | 28.5% | 35.5% | 13.5% | 0.7% | 9.8% | 12.0% | 100.0% |
| | Philippines | 31.4% | 34.3% | 14.5% | 1.5% | 8.1% | 10.2% | 100.0% |
| | Vietnam | 20.2% | 27.9% | 13.6% | 1.3% | 17.5% | 19.5% | 100.0% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 37.8% | 33.3% | 9.0% | 1.3% | 10.3% | 8.3% | 100.0% |
| | El Salvador | 6.9% | 15.9% | 32.7% | 2.4% | 15.4% | 26.7% | 100.0% |
| | Mexico | 7.1% | 12.1% | 18.5% | 11.6% | 17.3% | 33.4% | 100.0% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 24.2% | 31.4% | 12.7% | 1.2% | 13.1% | 17.4% | 100.0% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 13.2% | 22.6% | 22.8% | 0.4%* | 12.1% | 28.9% | 100.0% |
| | Jamaica | 24.9% | 28.4% | 25.3% | 0.7% | 10.5% | 10.2% | 100.0% |
| | All Others | 29.7% | 27.2% | 16.3% | 1.3% | 11.5% | 14.0% | 100.0% |

born in El Salvador, Mexico and the Dominican Republic have the lowest shares of professionals.

At the other extreme, among laborers, Mexican-born residents have the highest proportion in that category (33.4%), followed by Dominicans (28.9%) and Salvadorans (26.7%). The lowest shares in this category are found among those coming from the United Kingdom (5.6%), India (6.8%) and Canada (8.3%).

Together these patterns may explain, in part, some of the variations in naturalization rates by occupation. Looking at occupation status in general, however, it is clear that it is not as closely related to naturalization as is educational attainment. To be sure, such statuses are not always clear. In education, assuming progression with increased years of schooling is straightforward. This is not as true among occupations. Services include a wide array of positions. Some require extensive education, others require very little education. Precision production and crafts may be blue-collar occupations but they require special training and often pay considerably more than service and sales jobs. In sum, then, occupational status is, at best, a blunt instrument in predicting naturalization.

# XII. Income and Poverty

We have noted the fairly strong relationship between income and naturalization rates on the national level. Even after controlling for year of entry, the relationship remained fairly strong — the higher the income, however measured, the higher the probability of citizenship.

Income is assumed to be closely related to education and occupation, the other two basic socioeconomic variables. Thus far, we have found a strong relationship between educational attainment and naturalization and a more modest one between occupation and naturalization. Now, let us turn to income to note any differences among the top 15 countries.

We will examine household income in some detail and then look briefly at individual income among full-time workers. It should be understood that household income includes all the members of the household who are at least age 25 and have been in the country since at least 1985.

These data, as shown in Table 12.1, are a good example of the need to refine gross statistics. As we refine this study, several unexpected findings emerge. While it remains true that, overall, the higher the income the higher the naturalization rate, this is not the case with regard to natives of all countries. Indeed, for those coming from the United Kingdom and Canada, the opposite is true — the *lower* the income, the *higher* the naturalization rate! In the remaining European countries, no pattern is discerned.

Table 12.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Income: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Household Income | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Less than $15,000 | $15,000-$29,999 | $30,000-$49,999 | $50,000-$74,999 | $75,000-$99,999 | $100,000 or More |
| EUROPE | Germany | 82.8% | 80.5% | 76.0% | 75.9% | 77.1% | 72.8% |
| | Italy | 85.4% | 79.5% | 75.1% | 76.2% | 79.4% | 81.1% |
| | Poland | 83.0% | 74.0% | 68.5% | 71.9% | 77.8% | 81.6% |
| | United Kingdom | 70.7% | 65.0% | 55.8% | 54.3% | 51.6% | 47.6% |
| ASIA | China | 51.2% | 56.9% | 62.8% | 71.2% | 75.1% | 82.6% |
| | India | 40.4% | 41.5% | 43.5% | 51.7% | 55.7% | 57.1% |
| | Korea | 40.2% | 49.8% | 58.5% | 63.6% | 69.0% | 75.5% |
| | Philippines | 66.6% | 67.5% | 70.0% | 73.2% | 75.5% | 75.1% |
| | Vietnam | 37.4% | 49.4% | 62.9% | 70.0% | 69.9% | 79.8% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 72.3% | 65.6% | 57.7% | 53.3% | 51.6% | 49.0% |
| | El Salvador | 20.2% | 18.9% | 22.4% | 25.6% | 28.8% | 29.4% |
| | Mexico | 30.5% | 28.0% | 28.7% | 30.9% | 33.8% | 33.0% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 38.1% | 47.5% | 59.0% | 71.1% | 78.3% | 84.9% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 30.1% | 36.0% | 37.9% | 46.9% | 48.1% | 59.1% |
| | Jamaica | 49.6% | 48.4% | 48.3% | 50.9% | 56.9% | 59.6% |
| | All Others | 56.8% | 52.1% | 54.8% | 59.8% | 64.5% | 67.3% |

However, among the sources of today's immigration, a positive relationship *does* exist between household income and naturalization rates, especially among Asians. For those from China, for example, the rate rises from 51.2 percent among those earning less than $15,000 to 82.6 percent among those earning at least $100,000. The situation among those coming from Cuba is quite similar. Among the other Latin American and Caribbean sources, variations by income are less dramatic. Thus, the overall relationship noted in an earlier chapter is mainly due to the very strong pattern among Asian immigrants.

Among the highest household incomes ($100,000 or more), naturalization rates are highest for those coming from Cuba (84.9%), China (82.6%) and Poland (81.6%); the lowest are from El Salvador (29.4%), Mexico (33.0%) and the United Kingdom (47.6%).

Table 12.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Income and Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Year of Entry | Household Income | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Less than $15,000 | $15,000-$29,999 | $30,000-$49,999 | $50,000-$74,999 | $75,000-$99,999 | $100,000 or More |
| EUROPE | Germany: | 1975-84 | 23.4% | 24.4% | 25.3% | 22.5% | 21.0% | 20.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 56.9% | 54.3% | 52.2% | 50.1% | 48.0% | 46.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 87.5% | 88.2% | 85.2% | 85.4% | 86.4% | 87.7% |
| | Italy: | 1975-84 | 29.2% | 26.9% | 31.9% | 30.4% | 32.7% | 34.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 47.8% | 51.8% | 53.4% | 57.9% | 61.2% | 59.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 91.5% | 91.4% | 90.2% | 89.4% | 88.8% | 91.3% |
| | Poland: | 1975-84 | 35.9% | 32.1% | 35.9% | 40.5% | 46.3% | 41.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 59.9% | 59.9% | 62.8% | 68.4% | 73.4% | 72.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 90.0% | 88.9% | 88.3% | 88.2% | 91.3% | 93.4% |
| | United Kingdom: | 1975-84 | 17.4% | 15.4% | 16.1% | 16.6% | 16.1% | 12.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 33.4% | 41.5% | 39.1% | 43.4% | 43.0% | 43.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 80.2% | 77.8% | 73.5% | 74.0% | 75.6% | 74.3% |
| ASIA | China: | 1975-84 | 31.4% | 38.9% | 43.1% | 48.3% | 47.2% | 51.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 59.9% | 73.0% | 77.2% | 84.5% | 84.8% | 88.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 79.3% | 87.1% | 91.3% | 92.9% | 93.5% | 97.1% |
| | India: | 1975-84 | 22.3% | 31.7% | 34.1% | 39.0% | 39.1% | 40.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 68.5% | 65.6% | 66.8% | 68.1% | 72.4% | 69.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 80.4% | 76.6% | 76.5% | 78.5% | 67.0% | 75.9% |
| | Korea: | 1975-84 | 29.8% | 38.5% | 46.7% | 47.9% | 50.2% | 53.5% |
| | | 1965-74 | 68.8% | 78.4% | 82.2% | 86.4% | 89.1% | 91.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 85.7% | 91.7% | 91.3% | 93.5% | 95.6% | 95.5% |
| | Philippines: | 1975-84 | 51.1% | 55.1% | 58.0% | 59.6% | 61.3% | 56.9% |
| | | 1965-74 | 78.7% | 79.8% | 83.5% | 86.3% | 86.3% | 87.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 83.6% | 87.5% | 89.4% | 91.0% | 92.1% | 92.4% |
| | Vietnam: | 1975-84 | 35.9% | 47.7% | 61.5% | 68.8% | 68.7% | 78.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 70.7% | 81.9% | 84.7% | 84.6% | 92.2% | 92.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 42.3%* | 78.4%* | 76.0%* | 83.5%* | 33.0%* | 96.9%* |
| N/C AMERICA | Canada: | 1975-84 | 18.0% | 15.9% | 14.1% | 14.4% | 11.7%* | 15.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 38.4% | 29.8% | 31.9% | 31.4% | 30.0% | 30.2% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 78.4% | 76.3% | 70.7% | 67.9% | 66.5% | 66.7% |
| | El Salvador: | 1975-84 | 17.7% | 14.4% | 15.6% | 16.1% | 16.5%* | 18.5%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 24.4% | 37.0% | 42.1% | 43.8% | 45.4% | 41.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 46.4% | 56.8% | 59.4% | 64.4% | 65.4%* | 74.0%* |
| | Mexico: | 1975-84 | 21.4% | 20.5% | 19.1% | 19.2% | 17.7% | 18.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 30.4% | 28.6% | 29.6% | 29.5% | 31.4% | 30.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 47.6% | 47.4% | 47.8% | 49.0% | 54.9% | 52.7% |
| CARIBBEAN | Cuba: | 1975-84 | 14.3% | 16.5% | 24.1% | 26.4% | 35.7% | 40.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 34.8% | 46.4% | 56.1% | 67.5% | 72.4% | 75.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 66.2% | 75.1% | 81.5% | 86.4% | 89.2% | 94.0% |
| | Domin. Repub.: | 1975-84 | 19.6% | 22.8% | 22.5% | 26.9% | 20.5%* | 45.2%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 34.0% | 44.9% | 47.2% | 57.2% | 53.8% | 50.7%* |
| | | Pre-1965 | 56.0% | 59.5% | 59.1% | 66.9% | 75.1% | 79.6%* |
| | Jamaica: | 1975-84 | 33.8% | 29.7% | 31.3% | 31.9% | 38.3% | 40.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 53.1% | 62.4% | 62.2% | 63.1% | 67.2% | 67.2% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 76.9% | 81.7% | 80.2% | 83.5% | 82.2% | 84.9% |
| | All Others: | 1975-84 | 25.4% | 27.0% | 32.9% | 37.7% | 43.1% | 43.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 49.3% | 53.4% | 58.2% | 61.9% | 65.7% | 69.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 84.9% | 84.4% | 83.1% | 84.0% | 84.6% | 86.2% |



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For those earning under $15,000, the highest rates are found among those from Italy (85.4%), Poland (83.0%) and Germany (82.8%). The lowest rates are for those from El Salvador (20.2%), the Dominican Republic (30.1%) and Mexico (30.5%).

Because of the much smaller totals for individual income, we will not go into any detail by country of origin. Suffice it to say that, in general, the findings for household income are quite similar to those for individual incomes of full-time workers.

We now turn to year of entry to note if any of the rather peculiar relationships noted above hold among the various countries when year of entry is held constant (Table 12.2). Among the most recent arrivals, the expected pattern of increased naturalization with higher incomes is found among those from Asian sources and Cuba. Among Koreans, for example, naturalization rates climb from 29.8 percent among the poorest households to 53.5 percent among the richest. China's naturalization rate rises from 31.4 percent to 51.7 percent. The pattern is less dramatic among other Latin American and Caribbean countries. For European countries and Canada, no relationship is detected whatsoever. Indeed, for Germany, the United Kingdom and Canada, those earning less than $15,000 have a higher naturalization rate than those earning at least $100,000.

With the exception of Filipinos (51.1%),, no immigrants among the most recent arrivals with incomes under $15,000 have naturalization rates over 36 percent, irrespective of country of origin. The next highest rates are among Poles (35.9%), Vietnamese (35.9%) and Jamaicans (33.8%). The lowest are among Cubans (14.3%), Britons (17.4%) and Salvadorans (17.7%).

Turning to those foreign born who came to the United States between 1965 and 1974, a similar pattern exists. The current sources of immigration, especially Asian countries other than India and Cuba and Jamaica, exhibit a strong connection. Among the older sources of immigration, the relationship between household income and naturalization is weaker — among natives of the United Kingdom and Canada, the poor are *more* likely to be naturalized than the rich, albeit at low rates.

For those earning $100,000 or more, the highest naturalization rates are for people coming from Vietnam (92.1%), Korea (91.5%) and China (88.8%); the lowest are for those coming from Canada (30.2), Mexico (30.4%) and El Salvador (41.5%). Among the poorest immigrants, the highest naturalization rates are found among those coming from the Philippines (78.7%), Vietnam (70.7%) and Korea (68.8%). Natives of El Salvador (24.4%), Mexico (30.4%) and the United Kingdom (33.4%) display the lowest rates.

Naturalization rates are, expectedly, high for immigrants who arrived prior to 1965, irrespective of household income. Once again, China, Korea, the Philippines and Cuba show a positive relationship between income and naturalization, with other Latin American and Caribbean sources following. There is no relationship between income and naturalization among the older source countries.

The highest naturalization rates among those earning at least $100,000 are found among Chinese (97.1%), Koreans (95.5%) and Cubans (94.4%). The lowest are found among Mexicans (52.7%), Canadians (66.7%) and Britons (74.3%). As noted earlier, rates are high among these early arrivals, though among those earning less than $15,000, only 46.4 percent of Salvadorans are naturalized, followed by 47.6 percent of Mexicans and 56.0 percent of Dominicans. The highest rates are found among Italians (91.5%), Poles (90.0%) and Germans (87.5%).

All in all, looking at household income and naturalization rates results in a mixed bag. In general, there is a tendency for rates to rise with increased income, but the many exceptions weaken the relationship.

Here, as elsewhere, the nagging question concerning the intervening variable (this time, income) makes one wonder if perhaps variations in

income by country of origin do not account for some of the variations in naturalization rates. Table 12.3 shows both the household and individual full-time median incomes for all the foreign born, citizens and non-citizens. For informational purposes, the table also shows the share who earn more than $75,000 or $100,000 per year.

Table 12.3

**Household and Individual Full-Time Worker Incomes in 1990: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Median Household Income | % Over $100,000 | Median Individual Income | % Over $75,000 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EUROPE | Germany | $37,532 | 8.1% | $27,000 | 7.4% |
| | Italy | $34,880 | 6.3% | $27,500 | 5.2% |
| | Poland | $33,000 | 5.9% | $25,000 | 4.3% |
| | United Kingdom | $40,000 | 9.9% | $30,000 | 10.4% |
| ASIA | China | $40,632 | 9.7% | $20,065 | 5.4% |
| | India | $60,000 | 19.4% | $35,000 | 13.7% |
| | Korea | $40,000 | 9.5% | $22,000 | 6.1% |
| | Philippines | $53,100 | 11.2% | $24,000 | 3.0% |
| | Vietnam | $40,000 | 6.5% | $21,000 | 1.5% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | $31,814 | 8.1% | $28,454 | 8.3% |
| | El Salvador | $31,720 | 2.7% | $13,000 | 0.5% |
| | Mexico | $26,980 | 1.9% | $14,400 | 0.7% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | $40,453 | 5.3% | $20,000 | 3.8% |
| | Domin. Repub. | $28,790 | 1.7% | $16,000 | 1.2% |
| | Jamaica | $40,000 | 5.8% | $22,000 | 1.6% |
| | All Others | $39,100 | 7.6% | $24,000 | 5.5% |

Setting aside the Indian household income, which is considerably higher than for any other group (reflecting their educational attainment and occupational status), Filipinos have the next highest household income ($53,100). Six source countries are bunched around $40,000: the United Kingdom, China, Korea, Vietnam, Cuba and Jamaica. Since some of these have high naturalization rates and some have low rates, it is apparent that household income, per se, is not an important factor in determining naturalization rates. That is to say, natives of the United Kingdom, for example, do not display a low rate because of low income. Their income is about the same as that for Chinese, who have a much higher naturalization rate.

This is not the place for an extensive discussion of various types of income. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that household income can be misleading since a higher income may simply mean that a greater number of workers lives in a household or that more than one family shares a household. Note, for example, that Canada's median household income is $31,814, while its individual full-time median income is $28,454. On the other hand, El Salvador's household income almost equals that of Canada ($31,720), but its's individual full-time income is only $13,000.

In sum, it is clear that income and the two other socio-economic variables considered — occupation and education — are interrelated and together contribute to variations in naturalization rates. It is also apparent, however, that education is the most useful of these as a predictor of naturalization rates.

**Poverty**

There was a clear relationship between poverty status and naturalization rates in the national data — the poorer the individual, the lower the rate. This, of course, is just another way of measuring income. A look at the same data for separate countries pretty much repeats what we found for income: among Asian sources and Cuba, a positive relationship is clear, while among other Latin American and Caribbean sources, the pattern, while holding, is not as pronounced. Among the older source countries of Europe and Canada, no pattern exists. Controlling for year of entry again repeats what we noted on income. Thus, special tables will not be used to illustrate these data. However, it might be of interest to simply compare the top 15 countries on the extent of poverty among all the foreign born (Table 12.4).

Table 12.4

**Poverty Status in 1990: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Below Poverty | 100-149% of Pov. | 150-199% of Pov. | 200% or More of Pov. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EUROPE | Germany | 5.8% | 6.4% | 7.1% | 80.7% |
| | Italy | 7.1% | 9.1% | 9.0% | 74.8% |
| | Poland | 6.7% | 8.9% | 9.1% | 75.3% |
| | United Kingdom | 5.2% | 5.9% | 6.5% | 82.4% |
| ASIA | China | 9.4% | 9.8% | 9.9% | 70.9% |
| | India | 3.3% | 3.2% | 5.0% | 88.5% |
| | Korea | 9.4% | 7.3% | 8.8% | 74.5% |
| | Philippines | 3.7% | 4.3% | 6.3% | 85.8% |
| | Vietnam | 15.7% | 9.2% | 9.2% | 65.9% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 6.4% | 7.0% | 7.3% | 79.4% |
| | El Salvador | 18.3% | 17.9% | 17.8% | 46.0% |
| | Mexico | 22.5% | 18.2% | 16.2% | 43.1% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 13.0% | 9.1% | 9.6% | 68.3% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 26.6% | 13.0% | 14.1% | 46.3% |
| | Jamaica | 9.1% | 6.9% | 8.2% | 75.8% |
| | All Others | 10.1% | 8.4% | 9.1% | 72.4% |

Generally speaking, naturalization rates are low for groups with high rates of poverty — the Dominican Republic, Mexico, El Salvador. However, immigrants from both Vietnam and Cuba also display high levels of poverty and yet exhibit fairly high naturalization rates. The message of this table goes beyond the purpose of this study but vividly illustrates the wide discrepancies in poverty among the foreign-born residents of the United States. Some 40 percent of persons born in Mexico and the Dominican Republic are either in poverty or at 150 percent of poverty. On the other hand, only 6.5 percent of Indians and 8.0 percent of Filipinos fall in this category.

Discussion of poverty levels naturally leads to the related question: How many foreign born receive public assistance and how much do they receive? As shown in Table 12.5, there appears to be little relationship with naturalization rates. Rather, these data likely reflect either recency of arrival or large numbers of humanitarian immigrants. Note in particular, the relatively high public-assistance income for Vietnamese compared to other groups. This undoubtedly is the result of high numbers of refugees among this group, since refugees are eligible for welfare benefits upon arrival in the United States.

Table 12.5

**Foreign-Born Receipt of Public Assistance in 1990: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Percent Receiving Assistance | Number Receiving Assistance | Median Amount of Assistance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EUROPE | Germany | 2.3% | 14,848 | $4,000 |
| | Italy | 3.4% | 17,482 | $3,468 |
| | Poland | 3.5% | 10,819 | $3,761 |
| | United Kingdom | 2.4% | 12,733 | $3,351 |
| ASIA | China | 8.2% | 29,135 | $4,700 |
| | India | 2.0% | 5,419 | $3,500 |
| | Korea | 4.9% | 16,269 | $4,600 |
| | Philippines | 5.3% | 34,420 | $4,380 |
| | Vietnam | 12.7% | 38,483 | $6,696 |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 3.0% | 19,787 | $3,600 |
| | El Salvador | 3.8% | 9,401 | $3,840 |
| | Mexico | 6.0% | 152,032 | $3,264 |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 9.5% | 68,433 | $3,816 |
| | Domin. Repub. | 16.4% | 28,755 | $4,752 |
| | Jamaica | 3.9% | 8,039 | $3,600 |
| | All Others | 4.8% | 222,481 | $4,368 |

# XIII. Household Type

In an earlier section, we concluded that, after controlling for year of entry, little relationship between household type and naturalization rates was noted. Based on this conclusion, one might wonder why we should still look for a possible relationship by country of origin. Just because no relationship is found between the so-called "causal" variable and the dependent variable does not necessarily mean that a relationship is non-existent. Morris Rosenberg in his seminal book, *The Logic of Survey Analysis*, vividly illustrated this with what he called "suppressor variables." He stated: "...one may be...misled in assuming that an *absence* of relationship between two variables is real (that is, there is not an inherent link between the variables), whereas in fact the absence of the relationship may be due to the intrusion of a third variable. One may find that certain test factors, which we shall call *suppressor variables*, may intercede to cancel out, reduce, or conceal a true relationship between two variables. Negative findings may thus be just as misleading as positive findings."[1] For that reason, we now look at the possible relationship between household types and naturalization rates by country of origin. (Because of the very small numbers, group quarters are not included in the tabulations.)

Looking only at the overall naturalization rates in an earlier chapter, it was clear that, while differences are modest, those in single-parent households have the lowest rates, followed by married-couples and non-family households.

In ten of the 15 countries studied, non-family households do have the highest rates (Table 13.1). In the other five, married-couple households are first. These five countries are China, India, Korea, the Philippines and Cuba and undoubtedly reflect age at or year of entry, among other things.

In only four countries do female-headed households have higher naturalization rates than do male-headed ones: Germany, the United Kingdom, Vietnam and Canada. No pattern is discerned here, so, at this level, we can only conclude that controlling for country of origin merely refined our earlier findings and demonstrated modest differences among the 15 countries.

Now, let us turn to a brief analysis controlling for year at entry. This should allow us to better examine our earlier conclusion that household type is a limited predictor of naturalization rates. Among the foreign born coming since 1975, in nine coun-

Table 13.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Type: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Married Couple | Female-Headed | Male-Headed | Non-Family |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EUROPE | Germany | 52.0% | 79.6% | 73.8% | 83.0% |
| | Italy | 76.6% | 80.4% | 81.1% | 88.3% |
| | Poland | 73.9% | 63.9% | 70.1% | 79.7% |
| | United Kingdom | 56.3% | 63.6% | 56.5% | 64.0% |
| ASIA | China | 66.5% | 50.3% | 59.1% | 60.9% |
| | India | 50.6% | 41.2% | 54.8% | 42.9% |
| | Korea | 58.6% | 40.6% | 55.9% | 54.5% |
| | Philippines | 73.6% | 63.6% | 66.1% | 65.0% |
| | Vietnam | 60.6% | 55.4% | 52.5% | 62.8% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 57.3% | 64.5% | 59.1% | 66.4% |
| | El Salvador | 22.9% | 15.9% | 19.6% | 26.3% |
| | Mexico | 29.4% | 23.7% | 31.2% | 35.0% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 59.1% | 44.9% | 49.7% | 52.7% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 40.2% | 26.3% | 33.0% | 40.9% |
| | Jamaica | 51.9% | 41.5% | 47.1% | 53.3% |
| | All Others | 57.8% | 41.8% | 48.6% | 63.4% |

[1] Morris Rosenberg, *The Logic of Survey Analysis*, New York: Basic Books, 1968, pp. 84-85.

tries of origin, married-couple families have higher naturalization rates than non-family households (Table 13.2). Eight countries of origin exhibited higher rates for male- than female-headed households. As a whole, therefore, the only trend among the most recent arrivals appears to be that married-couple households from the current sources of immigration in Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean are somewhat more likely to be naturalized than those in female-headed households.

A clearer pattern is noted for those coming to the United States between 1965 and 1974. In 11 countries, married-couple households have higher naturalization rates than non-family households. This is especially marked among those from Asian sources. The only four countries where non-family households have higher rates are: Germany, Poland, the United Kingdom and Canada.

The pattern is reversed for the earliest arrivals. In only five countries of origin do married-couple households show higher naturalization rates than non-family households. These are China, Korea, Cuba, the Dominican Republic and Jamaica. Thus China exhibits such a pattern irrespective of year of arrival. Again, no pattern is noted for female- and male-headed families.

Except for a fairly consistent pattern of higher rates among married-couple households for Asian immigrants, it is obvious that the type of household is not a strong determiner of naturalization. Our intent was to show that by examining specific countries, the lack of a relationship would somehow be explained. This has not been the case. More likely, these data

Table 13.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by Household Type and Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Year of Entry | Household Type | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Married Couple | Female-Headed | Male-Headed | Non-Family |
| EUROPE | Germany: | 1975-84 | 21.7% | 42.7%* | 26.3%* | 26.9% |
| | | 1965-74 | 50.2% | 50.5%* | 50.7% | 57.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 86.0% | 86.2% | 82.9% | 88.6% |
| | Italy: | 1975-84 | 29.1% | 45.1%* | 30.8%* | 36.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 55.0% | 52.8% | 50.2% | 52.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 90.1% | 89.1% | 88.3% | 93.2% |
| | Poland: | 1975-84 | 39.5% | 22.4% | 31.3% | 32.5% |
| | | 1965-74 | 65.7% | 52.7% | 55.3% | 68.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 88.9% | 86.2% | 85.3% | 91.5% |
| | United Kingdom: | 1975-84 | 15.9% | 19.1% | 16.0% | 14.1% |
| | | 1965-74 | 41.0% | 49.6% | 36.0% | 43.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 75.3% | 81.5% | 71.8% | 78.2% |
| ASIA | China: | 1975-84 | 44.0% | 28.9% | 39.5% | 30.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 80.4% | 71.9% | 71.7% | 64.9% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 92.0% | 80.4% | 85.3% | 85.6% |
| | India: | 1975-84 | 37.4% | 31.0% | 33.2% | 23.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 69.0% | 63.4%* | 78.2%* | 62.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 73.6% | 68.8% | 71.7% | 86.0% |
| | Korea: | 1975-84 | 44.3% | 29.0% | 42.6% | 33.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 84.6% | 76.4% | 77.4% | 78.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 93.5% | 69.6%* | 94.1% | 92.2% |
| | Philippines: | 1975-84 | 60.1% | 54.4% | 54.4% | 44.5% |
| | | 1965-74 | 85.7% | 74.7% | 82.2% | 81.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 90.2% | 83.6% | 83.7% | 91.1% |
| | Vietnam: | 1975-84 | 58.9% | 54.9% | 50.4% | 61.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 85.1% | 78.4%* | 84.6% | 79.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 81.1% | 68.3%* | 17.9%* | 75.3%* |
| N/C AMERICA | Canada: | 1975-84 | 14.2% | 22.9%* | 13.8%* | 15.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 30.2% | 38.0%* | 28.7% | 36.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 71.0% | 75.5% | 68.8% | 76.7% |
| | El Salvador: | 1975-84 | 16.2% | 14.2% | 15.2% | 16.6% |
| | | 1965-74 | 42.6% | 24.6%* | 29.9% | 38.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 62.1% | 50.8%* | 41.1%* | 69.1% |
| | Mexico: | 1975-84 | 20.4% | 18.4% | 21.8% | 18.6% |
| | | 1965-74 | 29.7% | 25.1% | 31.1% | 28.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 47.9% | 43.3% | 46.1% | 54.1% |
| CARIBBEAN | Cuba: | 1975-84 | 21.1% | 16.1% | 15.1% | 18.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 55.0% | 44.3% | 46.5% | 47.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 82.4% | 73.9% | 76.0% | 76.8% |
| | Domin. Repub.: | 1975-84 | 23.8% | 15.6% | 21.7% | 26.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 49.0% | 36.5% | 38.4% | 37.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 64.3% | 56.7%* | 56.7% | 63.6% |
| | Jamaica: | 1975-84 | 33.9% | 23.7% | 30.5% | 32.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 63.7% | 58.7% | 59.1% | 62.3% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 83.6% | 74.6%* | 76.0% | 79.9% |
| | All Others: | 1975-84 | 34.6% | 25.8% | 27.2% | 28.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 60.7% | 51.3% | 50.6% | 56.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 84.2% | 78.6% | 77.6% | 87.0% |

Table 13.3

**Distribution of Foreign-Born Population in 1990 by Household Type: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Group Quarters | Married Couple | Female-Headed | Male-Headed | Non-Family | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| EUROPE | Germany | 1.9% | 67.5% | 1.9% | 6.9% | 21.8% | 100.0% |
| | Italy | 2.0% | 72.3% | 2.9% | 6.5% | 16.3% | 100.0% |
| | Poland | 2.2% | 65.0% | 3.1% | 6.6% | 23.1% | 100.0% |
| | United Kingdom | 1.9% | 66.9% | 1.9% | 6.7% | 22.6% | 100.0% |
| ASIA | China | 0.9% | 79.5% | 4.4% | 5.8% | 9.4% | 100.0% |
| | India | 0.5% | 87.1% | 2.6% | 2.3% | 7.5% | 100.0% |
| | Korea | 0.4% | 82.4% | 2.9% | 6.7% | 7.6% | 100.0% |
| | Philippines | 0.7% | 78.0% | 4.0% | 9.7% | 7.6% | 100.0% |
| | Vietnam | 0.6% | 72.4% | 9.4% | 9.5% | 8.1% | 100.0% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 2.2% | 66.2% | 1.9% | 6.3% | 23.4% | 100.0% |
| | El Salvador | 0.7% | 62.5% | 12.8% | 17.0% | 7.0% | 100.0% |
| | Mexico | 1.2% | 73.0% | 8.6% | 10.9% | 6.3% | 100.0% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 1.5% | 69.6% | 4.1% | 11.4% | 13.4% | 100.0% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 1.6% | 52.7% | 7.4% | 30.0% | 8.3% | 100.0% |
| | Jamaica | 1.5% | 55.7% | 4.6% | 22.4% | 15.8% | 100.0% |
| | All Others | 1.6% | 68.2% | 4.8% | 9.2% | 16.2% | 100.0% |

simply reflect the age at and year of entry of these individuals.

As before, we examine the relationship between country of origin and household structure. Since both married-couple households and non-family households have considerably higher rates of naturalization than the single-headed family households, any significant variation on the type of household by country of origin might have some impact on naturalization.

Some rather remarkable variations are noted in Table 13.3. The share of foreign born living in married-couple households varies from 52.7 percent for Dominicans to 87.1 percent for Indians. Among female-headed households, the range is from 12.8 percent for Salvadorans to 1.9 percent for Germans, Britons and Canadians. Among male-headed households, Dominicans have 30 percent, compared to 2.3 percent for Indians. Among non-family households, the shares range from 23.4 percent for Canadians to 6.3 percent for Mexicans. These are all clearly related to naturalization rates. One cannot expect a high rate when 30 percent of the people reside in male-headed households where, as we have seen, the naturalization rate is quite low. Thus, variations in household composition apparently do play some role in determining country of origin variations in naturalization rates.

Earlier, when we examined marital status, we failed to find any significant relationship with naturalization rates, although data on marital status did explain some of the household findings. A quick examination by country of origin fails to note any additional relationship with naturalization, so we will not discuss marital status, per se, in this section.

# XIV. Language

Two questions from the 1990 Census were used to determine English language capability and how that is related to naturalization. Overall, we noted that the ability to speak English well contributed significantly to naturalization, whether the foreign born are new or old residents of the nation. To be sure, the rates went up with length of stay, but we concluded that the ability of speak the language "well" or better certainly contributed, along with year of entry, to the naturalization rate. However, language spoken in the home failed to yield any significant result and is not a very good predictor of whether an immigrant will naturalize.

Now we will turn to our top 15 countries and examine these two language variables in more detail. We must consider the fact that, in most countries of origin, English is not the major language spoken. Except for Britons and a majority of Canadians, Jamaicans and Indians, along with some Filipinos, natives of most other countries of origin do not speak English as a first language.[1]

Looking first at the ability to speak English, a significant difference in naturalization rates is noted (Table 14.1). Cubans are a good example: 73.4 percent of those who speak English very well or well are naturalized, while only 32.2 percent of those who speak it poorly or not at all have become citizens. On the other hand, among immigrants from the United Kingdom, the difference between good and poor English speakers is 0.7 percent.[2] Our original conclusion remains intact, however: the ability to speak English adequately is a strong predictor of naturalization, with the exceptions, as noted, being English-speaking countries like the United Kingdom, Canada[3] and Jamaica.

Table 14.1

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by English Language Ability and Usage: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Able to Speak English... | | Language Spoken at Home | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Very Well/ Well | Not Well/ Not at All | Other Language | English |
| EUROPE | Germany | 73.2% | 58.3% | 72.8% | 85.8% |
| | Italy | 80.2% | 57.2% | 75.4% | 92.6% |
| | Poland | 75.4% | 44.3% | 69.4% | 93.0% |
| | United Kingdom | 56.7% | 56.0% | 56.7% | 58.8% |
| ASIA | China | 78.9% | 46.2% | 63.7% | 82.3% |
| | India | 50.3% | 23.1% | 48.3% | 61.1% |
| | Korea | 66.7% | 30.8% | 55.6% | 81.7% |
| | Philippines | 72.6% | 48.7% | 70.9% | 79.8% |
| | Vietnam | 73.4% | 30.9% | 59.2% | 70.1% |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 57.4% | 53.0% | 57.1% | 61.0% |
| | El Salvador | 28.0% | 13.7% | 21.3% | 32.1% |
| | Mexico | 37.6% | 20.1% | 29.0% | 40.5% |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 73.4% | 32.2% | 55.8% | 63.5% |
| | Domin. Repub. | 49.1% | 23.4% | 36.8% | 39.4% |
| | Jamaica | 50.8% | 50.6% | 50.7% | 50.4% |
| | All Others | 59.0% | 28.7% | 52.8% | 70.6% |

[1] It is important to bear in mind that in our sampling procedure, we did not include respondents who reported that they only spoke English. This ensures that the analyses only compare differences in competency between persons for whom English is not the first language.

[2] This might be the appropriate place to point out that country of origin does not necessarily mean that the individuals are of that nationality. In the case of the United Kingdom, this could include former colonials who moved to Great Britain.

[3] It is not possible to separate out French-speaking Canadians (Quebeckers) from other Canadians. Here too, people coming from Canada may be of many different ethnic backgrounds.

For all countries, those speaking English at home are more likely to be naturalized than those speaking another language at home. This relationship was noted in our earlier overall analysis. However, we also noted that, after controlling for year of entry, this relationship is weakened. Let us now turn to these language variables for the 15 countries by year of entry (Table 14.2).

Without exception and regardless of year of entry, those who speak English adequately are much more likely to be naturalized than those who speak English poorly or not at all. Furthermore, the longer the time spent in the United States, the higher the rate. All this is to be expected. Both variables play an important role in predicting who will and who will not become an American citizen.

Nevertheless, variations exist among the countries of origin. Looking first at the newest arrivals, the naturalization rates for Vietnamese (72.3%), Filipinos (59.6%) and Chinese (57.4%) who speak English well are considerably higher than for those from other sources. Immigrants from Canada (17.1%), the United Kingdom (19.4%) and Germany (20.8%) have the lowest rates. Even among those who have trouble with the English language, some variations are noted — the naturalization rate is 39.8 percent for those from the Philippines, compared to 10.6 percent for those from Cuba.

For those who arrived between 1965 and 1974, a some-

Table 14.2

**Naturalization Rates in 1990 by English Language Ability and Usage and Year of Entry: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Year of Entry | Able to Speak English... | | Language Spoken at Home | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Very Well/ Well | Not Well/ Not at All | Other Language | English |
| EUROPE | Germany: | 1975-84 | 20.8% | 5.1%* | 20.3% | 34.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 47.0% | 33.5%* | 46.7% | 60.5% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 83.6% | 68.2% | 83.2% | 90.7% |
| | Italy: | 1975-84 | 33.8% | 15.7% | 29.4% | 42.0% |
| | | 1965-74 | 59.5% | 37.9% | 53.5% | 66.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 91.7% | 74.3% | 88.6% | 96.2% |
| | Poland: | 1975-84 | 42.3% | 17.8% | 35.9% | 58.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 69.9% | 43.2% | 63.8% | 76.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 89.9% | 66.0% | 86.3% | 95.8% |
| | United Kingdom: | 1975-84 | 19.4% | 27.4%* | 19.7% | 15.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 47.9% | 39.7%* | 47.5% | 40.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 79.2% | 74.2%* | 79.0% | 76.1% |
| ASIA | China: | 1975-84 | 57.4% | 17.1% | 41.9% | 32.4% |
| | | 1965-74 | 89.6% | 61.0% | 78.1% | 75.8% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 94.6% | 78.7% | 89.3% | 95.8% |
| | India: | 1975-84 | 37.7% | 17.8% | 35.9% | 36.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 68.9% | 44.5% | 68.0% | 74.3% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 71.5% | 50.4%* | 70.7% | 82.2% |
| | Korea: | 1975-84 | 53.7% | 23.5% | 42.3% | 58.1% |
| | | 1965-74 | 86.3% | 66.2% | 82.8% | 89.4% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 93.7% | 60.7%* | 89.8% | 96.5% |
| | Philippines: | 1975-84 | 59.6% | 39.8% | 58.0% | 56.8% |
| | | 1965-74 | 85.9% | 63.0% | 84.9% | 84.1% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 91.2% | 61.3% | 88.2% | 93.8% |
| | Vietnam: | 1975-84 | 72.3% | 30.6% | 57.8% | 63.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 87.5% | 58.4%* | 84.9% | 80.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 81.3%* | 22.9%* | 59.3% | 90.7%* |
| N/C AMERICA | Canada: | 1975-84 | 17.1% | 19.2%* | 17.2% | 14.2% |
| | | 1965-74 | 32.0% | 25.2%* | 31.7% | 31.7% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 71.1% | 64.0% | 70.7% | 73.2% |
| | El Salvador: | 1975-84 | 19.3% | 12.2% | 15.7% | 18.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 46.8% | 21.4% | 38.2% | 42.9%* |
| | | Pre-1965 | 64.3% | 33.0%* | 57.3% | 71.1%* |
| | Mexico: | 1975-84 | 24.7% | 16.5% | 19.9% | 24.7% |
| | | 1965-74 | 36.5% | 20.7% | 29.4% | 33.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 56.1% | 31.3% | 47.3% | 62.1% |
| CARIBBEAN | Cuba: | 1975-84 | 36.5% | 10.6% | 19.7% | 14.7%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 69.6% | 32.7% | 52.8% | 49.6% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 86.7% | 61.3% | 80.0% | 85.0% |
| | Domin. Repub.: | 1975-84 | 31.4% | 15.9% | 22.4% | 22.1%* |
| | | 1965-74 | 55.3% | 27.6% | 44.3% | 36.4%* |
| | | Pre-1965 | 68.6% | 47.5% | 61.0% | 70.0% |
| | Jamaica: | 1975-84 | 32.9% | 19.5% | 32.1% | 32.3% |
| | | 1965-74 | 63.7% | 40.7%* | 62.7% | 62.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 76.1% | 93.9%* | 78.8% | 81.0% |
| | All Others: | 1975-84 | 37.6% | 16.5% | 32.0% | 34.6% |
| | | 1965-74 | 64.0% | 35.4% | 58.6% | 59.0% |
| | | Pre-1965 | 84.0% | 62.2% | 81.3% | 88.7% |

what similar pattern is noted. Among English speakers, the naturalization rate is highest for Chinese (89.6%), Vietnamese (87.5%) and Koreans (86.3%). The lowest rates are for those from Canada (32%), Mexico (36.5%) and Germany (47%). Among those having language difficulties, the naturalization rates are remarkably high for Koreans (66.2%), Filipinos (63%) and Chinese (61%), with Mexicans (20.7%), Salvadorans (21.4%) and Dominicans (27.6%) at the bottom.

Even among those arriving before 1965, Asians have high rates among those who speak English adequately. The naturalization rate for Chinese is 94.6 percent, followed by Koreans (93.7%) and Italians (91.7%). The lowest rates are among Mexicans (56.1%), Salvadorans (64.3%) and Canadians (64%). Rates are lower for those who don't speak English or speak it poorly. Yet the Chinese rate is quite impressive (78.7%), as are the Italian (74.3%) and German (68.2%) rates. The lowest rates are noted for immigrants from Mexico (31.3%), the Dominican Republic (47.5%) and Cuba (61.3%).

It seems clear that the foreign born from Asian sources, even newcomers, are quite anxious to be naturalized if they speak the language adequately. Overall and over time, it is clear that language capability plays an important role in determining naturalization.

When we turn to the question of language spoken in the home, however, the trend is not as clear. Among newcomers, there are four countries whose immigrants who do not speak English at home have higher naturalization rates than those who do speak English at home. Among those who arrived between 1965 and 1974, the rates are about even. It is only among the oldest immigrants that those living in homes where English is spoken predominate. Thus, we maintain our earlier conclusion that this variable is not generally a robust indicator of naturalization, although it is for certain countries of origin.

Perhaps most important is the variation by country of origin in the ability to speak English and the language spoken at home. As noted previously, while we cannot control for all these factors at once, a review of the relationship between the independent and intervening variables can give us clues as to why certain countries have higher naturalization rates than others. However, it is not the purpose of this paper to delve into detail in these relations.

In Table 14.3, we show the percentage of immigrants who speak English poorly or not at all and the percentage who speak a language other than English at home. The variation in English capability is enormous and that is to be expected. Certainly, this contributes to variations in the naturalization rate for the different countries.

Table 14.3

**Distribution of Foreign-Born Population in 1990 by English Language Ability and Usage: Top 15 Countries of Origin**

| | Country | Speak English Not Well/Not at All | Speak Other than English at Home | Total Sample Size* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| EUROPE | Germany | 2.6% | 56.9% | 648,784 |
| | Italy | 20.9% | 77.8% | 518,402 |
| | Poland | 19.3% | 76.2% | 310,982 |
| | United Kingdom | 4.7% | 5.0% | 537,589 |
| ASIA | China | 46.5% | 95.5% | 355,483 |
| | India | 7.1% | 88.4% | 271,824 |
| | Korea | 31.0% | 92.2% | 333,210 |
| | Philippines | 7.0% | 90.7% | 648,755 |
| | Vietnam | 33.4% | 96.9% | 303,845 |
| N/C AMER. | Canada | 5.7% | 17.9% | 667,664 |
| | El Salvador | 46.7% | 96.9% | 246,371 |
| | Mexico | 49.2% | 95.8% | 2,531,783 |
| CARIB. | Cuba | 42.7% | 95.0% | 722,783 |
| | Domin. Repub. | 47.9% | 95.9% | 175,442 |
| | Jamaica | 7.0% | 5.4% | 206,166 |
| | All Others | 20.5% | 75.0% | 4,626,156 |

* Includes both English speakers and others.

The large share of immigrant homes where English is not spoken (or at least is not the main language for conversation) is unexpected. Only in truly English-speaking countries of origin is this not the case. Although not shown here, this pattern is found even among early-arriving immigrants. If, for example, over 90 percent of foreign-born residents from certain countries who came here at least 25 years ago still speak a language other than English at home, one may question the success of cultural adaptation — or perhaps language should not be a measure of adaptation. This is certainly an issue that warrants further investigation.

## XV. Conclusion

How many naturalize? and Who are they? How many was easy to answer: 54.1 percent of all those who, in 1990 and under our assumptions, could have naturalized if they so desired. Who naturalizes? The initial answer is obvious: those who have been here the longest and those who arrived as children. But the issue is far more complex, particularly regarding the reasons for naturalization and the influence policy can have on selecting immigrants likely to become citizens rather than remain as permanent guests.

Looking at the broad picture, those immigrants with higher education levels, in white-collar occupations and with higher incomes are the most likely to naturalize. Household formation and marital status plays a less significant role in determining whether an immigrant opts for citizenship or not. English language ability is one of the more relevant factors in predicting naturalization. But, interestingly, English usage in the home is not.

When comparing naturalization rates among the top 15 immigration countries, which account for more than two-thirds of all immigrants, Italy, Germany and Poland exhibit the highest naturalization rates. Of course, these are all early immigration sources. After controlling for year of entry, an entirely different picture emerges, and a time-tested demographic device — standardization — shows higher naturalization rates, *if year of entry is not a factor,* among immigrants from the Philippines, Korea and China, while those born in Mexico, El Salvador and Canada have the lowest rates.

Indeed, one of the more unexpected findings from this study is the generally low rate of naturalization for immigrants from the United Kingdom and Canada, especially when compared to other European and Asian sources.

Naturalization may be related to distance travelled from the country of birth or the nature of the regime in the home country. The low rates for Canada and Mexico certainly back up this theory, as does the relatively high rate (for a Caribbean country) for Cuba. Jamaica, however, is an exception to this "rule."

The Asian naturalization rates are particularly high, especially among those arriving in more recent years. One wonders if this contributed to the huge increase in immigration from that continent. In other words, did immigrants naturalize to become Americans or simply to facilitate the immigration of their relatives? Our data have no reply to that question. But if one goal of our nation's immigration policy should be to promote naturalization, then this study clearly points to policy changes that can increase the likelihood of selecting newcomers likely to embrace America as their own. A return to national-origins quotas is neither advisable nor likely, so some of the differences in naturalization rates highlighted here will persist. But a federal immigration policy that puts more emphasis on a prospective immigrant's education and skills, rather than his or her family connections, can help ensure the selection of immigrants in the future who will *join* America, rather than simply reside here.

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